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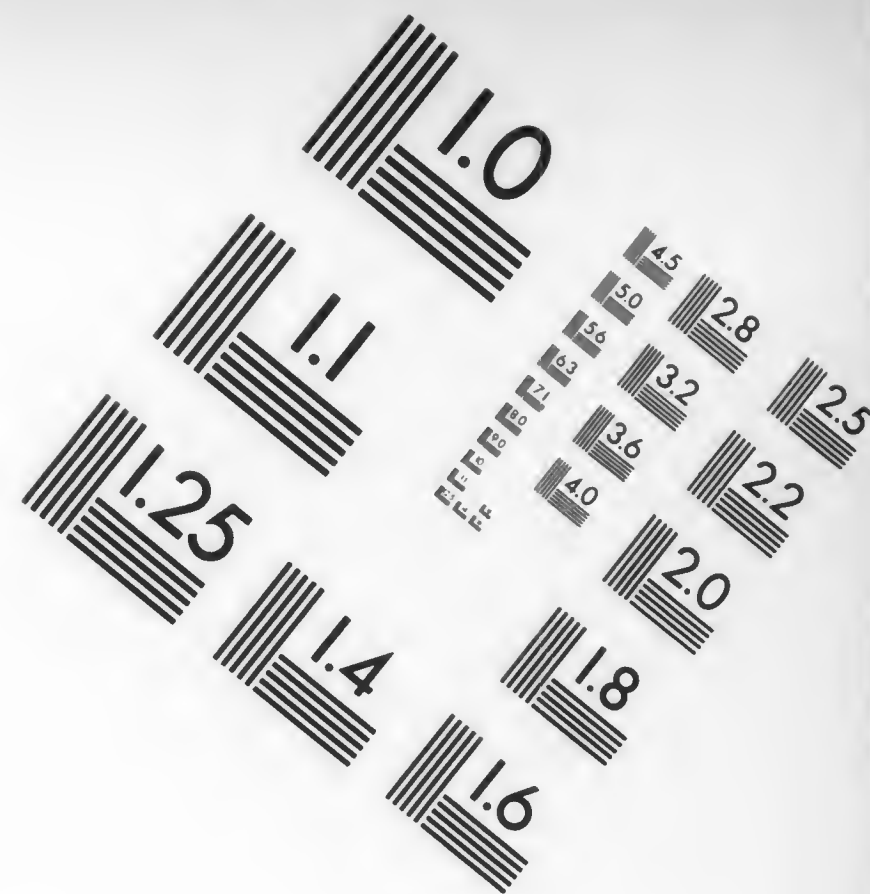
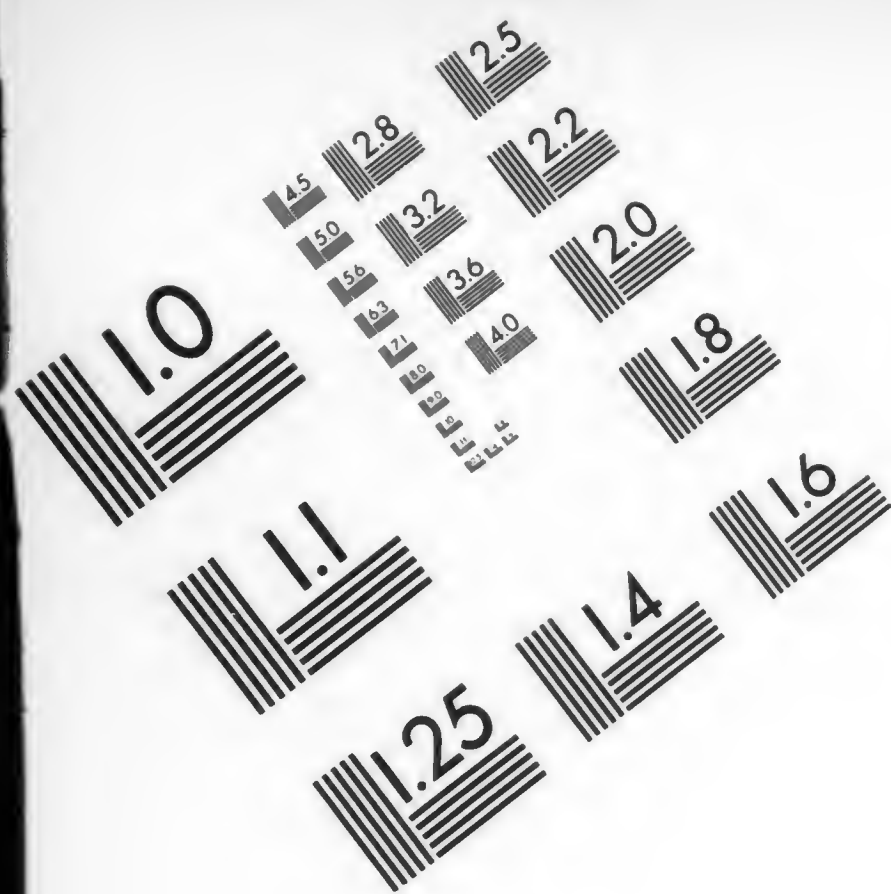
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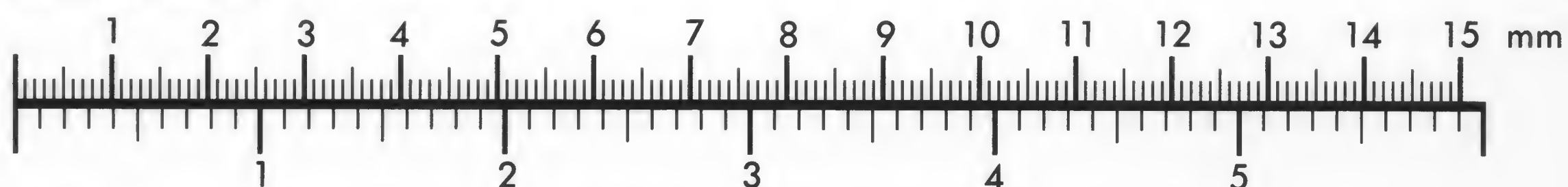
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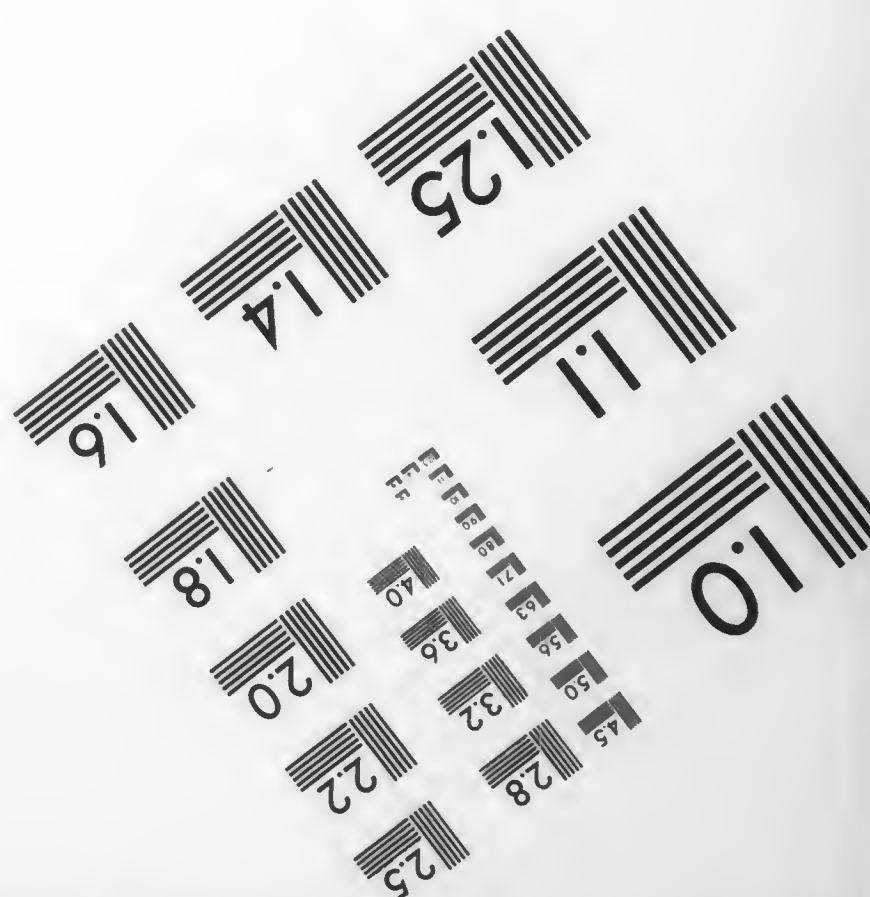
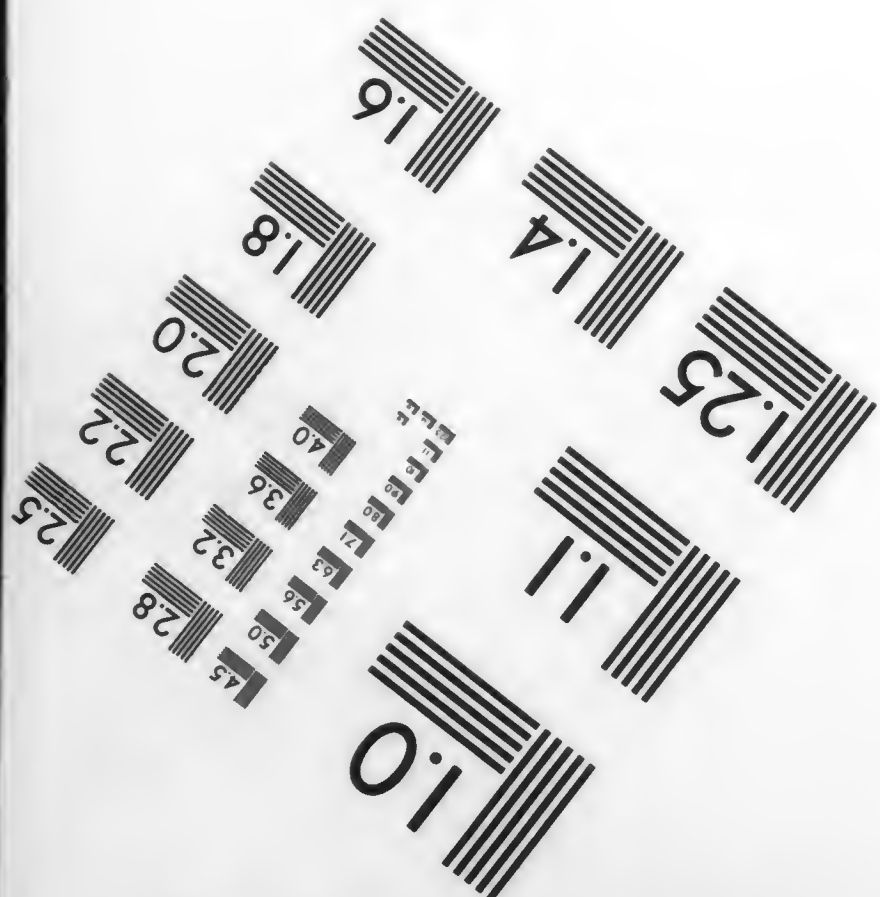
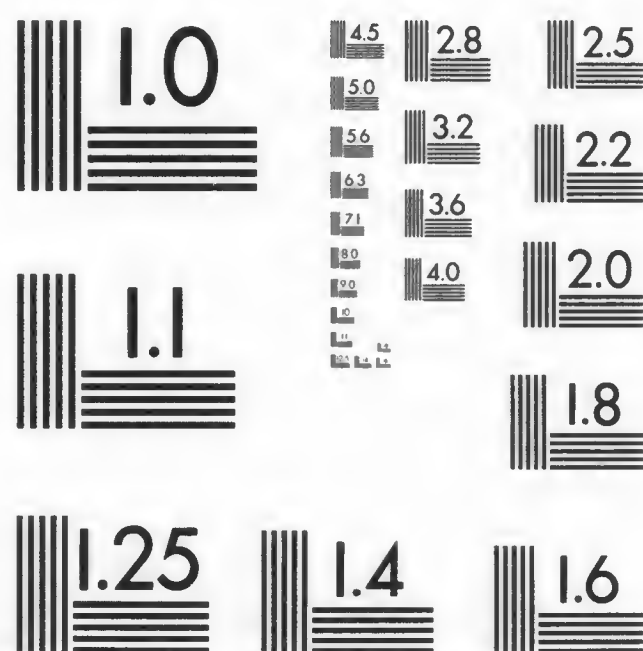
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# GLORIOUS RUSSIA

ITS LIFE, PEOPLE  
AND DESTINY

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS



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# Glorious Russia

ITS LIFE, PEOPLE  
AND DESTINY

BY

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS

AUTHOR OF

"In the Track of the Russian Famine," "Round About Armenia"  
"The Court of Russia in the Nineteenth Century"  
"The Life of Catherine the Great of Russia"  
etc., etc.



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## PREFACE

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THIS book is addressed to the general public rather than the student. The latter is referred to the profound and exhaustive work of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, which has been recently republished in a new edition.

The historical works of the late Mr. Nisbet Bain and of Mr. F. H. Skrine may also be recommended.

Of lighter books on Russia there have lately been several, notably the graceful sketches of the Honble. Maurice Baring and Mr. Stephen Graham.

So far, however, there has been no attempt to place before the British public a comprehensive and popular survey of the great country with which we are so fortunate as to be allied.

Now that the friendship of the British and Russian Empires has been cemented by blood, it should receive a foundation of mutual understanding

## PREFACE

and knowledge, towards which the present modest work may assist in paving the way.

A word regarding the title. In Russian "Slava" means glory, and hence the Slav Race is, as it has indeed proved itself to be, a Glorious Race.

E. A. BRAYLEY HODGETTS.

LONDON, *September*, 1915.

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# Glorious Russia

## CHAPTER I

### THE AUTOCRACY

A GREAT Russian novelist, Tourgeniev, has stated that his country differed from all European nations in so far that whilst reforms in the West had come as the result of revolution or agitation from below, the reforms in Russia had come from above. They had, in short, been conferred on the country by its Emperors. This was a great tribute from a man who had suffered exile for his political opinions and writings, and who can not be described as even remotely a courtier. He was fearless, and told the people what he thought, without considering whether it was pleasant to them or agreeable to the government, and he was consequently liked by neither. But what he said was true. All revolutionary attempts to bring about changes in the government of Russia or its methods seem doomed to failure. On the other hand, when changes become necessary they



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are introduced by her rulers. This is a most extraordinary fact, which goes to prove to what an extent the Russian throne is a national institution, imbued with a sense of national duty. In no country have the rulers been more in complete accord and sympathy with their people, and in those exceptional cases where they fell short of the national ideal and lost touch with the will of their subjects they came to a sad end, and indirectly committed suicide. The remarkable manner in which the Tzars of Russia seemed to scent what was expected of them, and to know instinctively which line to take, fills the student with wonder.

Take, for instance, the case of the creator of the modern Russian Empire, the man whom I have elsewhere called Russia's first Nihilist, Peter the Great. The manner of his coming to the throne, of asserting himself, and of introducing modernity into his country was almost supernatural. Here was a young fellow who with his brother was joint Tzar of Muscovy, whose mother, a Hamilton on her mother's side, was in disgrace for being too European, and whose aunt, the Princess Sophia, the Regent, was actively intriguing against him in favour of his half-witted half-brother. Rumour hath it that Peter's real father was a German sergeant of phenomenal physique, who had found favour with the Tzaritza Natalia, his mother; but whatever the truth of that story may be, there can be little doubt that Peter was what is commonly

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called daft. He had a bee in his bonnet, and early developed a tendency for strong drink, low company and extravagant behaviour. Yet he was to become the great regenerator of his country.

Peter had an hereditary bias in favour of European manners and customs from his mother, and both his reputed father and grandfather had coquetted with Western ideas. Brought up in the village of Preobrajensky, he played at soldiers with his companions, hence the Preobrajensky Guards, and later spent his time in the German quarter of Moscow carousing with the members of the German colony, which was already a feature of that capital.

When the time came for him to assert himself he showed at an early age an unprecedented amount of initiative and determination of character which surprised everyone, and a relentless energy and severity which effectively quelled disaffection. Whilst there was much that was lovable about Peter the Great, his fierce harshness and furious temper made him terrible in the eyes of his subjects. And yet his appearance was a political necessity, and such his subjects felt it to be.

To the British public he is chiefly known for having put his son to death after torturing him, for having defeated Charles XII. and the Turks, and for building a new capital on a swamp. But he did much more. He remodelled the government, introduced plan and system where there had before been chaos, and fostered trade. He taught his country the applied

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arts of the West by first serving an apprenticeship as a common working-man in Holland himself, and by importing into his country foreigners, principally from England and Germany, to teach his subjects what he had so laboriously learned.

Carlyle made a hero of Frederick the Great, but surely Peter was far more of a hero. Imagine an autocratic ruler on whose word an entire nation depended, who had absolute power of life and death, and had displayed an unflinching ability to exercise that power, voluntarily going abroad disguised as a common journeyman carpenter, and practising his trade under strenuous conditions in foreign countries, so as to be able to show his subjects an example of industry and skill! Whilst never surrendering the least iota of power, he was nevertheless most thoroughly democratic in his intercourse with all and sundry. He hated empty pomps and vanities, but insisted on efficiency. With his familiars he was on extraordinary terms, pretending in many cases to be under their command, and certainly it may be said of him that he fully acted up to the scriptural injunction that "whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all."

His faults were many and deplorable, and led to his early death in the prime of manhood, racked by disease, but his genius has never been in doubt, and even to-day Russian historians quote his memoranda and sayings in witness of his extraordinary wisdom and far-sightedness. He seems to have foreseen

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everything, and Catherine II. when in difficulties invariably found an answer in the trenchant and brilliant dicta he had left as a heritage to his successors.

Peter I. died in 1725, and Catherine the Great did not ascend the throne until 1760. During that period Russia was virtually neglected. Her rulers were too much engaged with their own petty affairs to devote much time to the State, and so the reforms introduced by Peter the Great bore but little fruit. But the destiny of the Empire seemed to triumph over the futility of her rulers, for under Anne and Elizabeth Russia made enormous strides in power and importance. The progress of the country might be retarded, it could not be arrested; the efforts of our Hanoverian Kings and of the selfish rulers of German states were powerless to hinder her in her historical mission or to limit her frontiers. Like some primeval natural force, Russia has irresistibly grown in volume and energy, and no effort to stop her has availed, nor have her own mistakes and shortcomings apparently affected her.

When Elizabeth—under whom Russia had been benevolently and prudently governed with the aid of such statesmen as Bestujev Ryumin—died, she was succeeded by her nephew, Peter III., a contemptible person, a traitor to his country, and the disciple and admirer of Frederick the Great of Prussia. His treatment of the army and the church and his blindness to the true interests of his adopted country,



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which he regarded as of but secondary importance in comparison with those of his own Duchy of Holstein, created so much dissatisfaction that he was deposed without difficulty, and subsequently inadvertently murdered, whilst his wife, the beautiful Catherine, was made his successor. Catherine has been much reproached for the immorality of her private life, though why she should have been especially singled out for blame it is difficult to understand. Those were days when morals were lax all the world over, and more especially in Russia. Catherine's predecessors, Elizabeth, Anne and Catherine I., had certainly been no more virtuous than she, who at least knew how to maintain a dignified court, and attracted to her capital men of light and leading from every part of Europe. She was a great patroness of the arts, and under her reign the country flourished exceedingly in every department of activity. She introduced arts and letters, newspapers and theatres, and promoted manufactures and trades. It was under her that Turkey was seriously humbled, and lost some of its richest provinces to Russia. She also sowed the seeds of representative government by organising the nobility into corporate bodies and creating municipalities. It was under Catherine that the dreams of Panslavism first took a sort of nebulous shape. She caused her second grandson to be christened Constantine, with the idea of emancipating Greece from Turkey, and reviving a Byzantine state with its capital at Constantinople

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under his rule. As she wrote to her confidant, Grimm, "After all, such a slice of Turkey would not make a bad portion for a younger son." But Catherine did not live long enough to realise any of these dreams, though she planted the seed of a noble idea, the emancipation of the Christian provinces of Turkey from Ottoman rule, a dream which is at last coming true.

Catherine, after causing her grand-children to be brought up in the latest ideas of the French philosophers, and the visionary theories of universal brotherhood, which were the intellectual stimulants of the French, died, and left the succession to her son Paul, who closely resembled Peter III. in character and temperament, was quite as pro-German, and quite as unpopular. He retained his throne for a little over four years, and then was murdered, much as Peter III. had been, by the nobles and courtiers who knew that he was ruining his country. Whether his murderers were animated by purely patriotic motives, or whether they hoped to benefit themselves by placing on the throne the young and inexperienced Alexander, whose sentimental views and amiable disposition had led people to base the greatest hopes on him, it is impossible to say. But the murder of Paul is yet another illustration of the dependence of the autocrat on the sympathies of the people.

With the accession of Alexander I. it may be said that the imperial office underwent a remarkable and radical change. The tone of the court was much

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improved, and the efficiency of the Government was immeasurably increased. Alexander I. started as a liberal ruler, and is believed to have been honestly desirous of introducing into practice and applying to politics the beautiful theories he had been taught by his Swiss tutor, La Harpe. He surrounded himself with broad-minded statesmen, such as Prince Adam Czartorisky and Speransky, and even instructed the latter to draw up a scheme of constitutional government, a State Duma, but unfortunately the machinations of reactionary sycophants, the war with Napoleon, and the baneful influence of Metternich, added to certain manifestations of political unrest, which took the form of secret societies masquerading in the guise of free-masonry, caused him to turn from his early associates, and to favour the sterner counsels of his military advisers. Alexander I. died of a fever in the South of Russia, a disappointed man. A legend exists in Russia that he did not really die at all, but escaped from the cares of State to lead the life of a recluse in Siberia. The fabulous nature of this legend has now been satisfactorily exposed by the Grand-Duke Nicholas, and was demonstrated by the present writer in an earlier work.

Alexander I. was succeeded by his brother Nicholas I., the founder of splendid traditions. On his accession he was confronted by a mutiny of the guards fomented by the secret societies to which reference has just been made. Nicholas was a soldier, and whilst a very just and fair-minded man,

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a very stern ruler, and he put down the mutiny with a strong hand, and ruled his country with a rod of iron. His intimates assert that he was at heart imbued with liberal ideas, and prepared the way for constitutional government and the emancipation of the peasants. But whatever his views may have been, he had but little sympathy with people who did not see eye to eye with him. He had been educated for the army, and as he was his father's third son he never expected to reign. His eldest brother, however, had no issue, and Constantine, the next in succession, voluntarily waived his right to the throne in order to marry a Polish lady. The wife of Nicholas was the daughter of the famous Queen Louise of Prussia, whose life-long platonic friend and admirer Alexander I. had been, and her favourite brother was that splendid historical figure who became William I. of Prussia, and later first German Emperor.

Alexander I. had always befriended Prussia, and his brother Nicholas was described by Pushkin, the poet, in some secretly-circulated satirical verses in the following lines :—

“ Our Emperor's a Prussian,  
A German not a Russian.”

The traditions of friendship to Prussia and Austria, which Nicholas maintained, notably in 1848 when he massed troops on the Polish frontier and marched an army into Hungary to quell the Kossuth rebellion, received a rude shock a few years later when Russia



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in her turn needed the friendship of her two neighbours, but was left in the lurch by them, and had to face single handed the allied armies of Turkey, France, England and Sardinia. Not only did Prussia and Austria desert their friend and former "Holy Ally," but they actually intrigued against her. Nicholas I. was a simple, straightforward soldier, no diplomatist, but a very clever and far-seeing man nevertheless. He saw ahead of his generation. To him the dismemberment of Turkey was so inevitable and so patent a fact, that he could not imagine that it was not equally obvious to his contemporaries. His manly proposals to England were nevertheless received with distrust, and we preferred the insincerities of Napoleon III. to the honest friendship of Nicholas I., and yet we are to-day virtually carrying out his ideas. Egypt is already ours as he proposed it should be, and Constantinople is about to be restored to the Slavs. Nicholas I., who had been brought up by a Scottish nurse, was a sincere admirer of the English and of our literature. He was fond of reading Sir Walter Scott's novels aloud to his wife, but he did not admire our system of party government, and would never have imitated his brother, who asked Earl Grey whether he could assist him in the creation of an opposition on English lines in Russia. Earl Grey is reported to have replied that his Majesty need but introduce parliamentary government into Russia, and he would have as much opposition as he could possibly wish.

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Nicholas I. had no such morbid cravings, but his loyal nature was rudely shocked by the self-seeking attitude of his neighbours. The Crimean War killed him; it did more, it revolutionised Russia. Just as in the days preceding the accession of Peter the Great the Western winds had already begun to blow into Russia, and, as it were, heralded the thaw of old institutions and the springtime of a new era, so the Crimean War had but brought to a head tendencies and ideas that had first taken nebulous shape under the cultured reign of Catherine II., to be philandered with by Alexander I. It was impossible to share with French philosophers a belief in the rights of man, and yet refuse them to the bulk of the population of one's own country. The problem of emancipating the peasantry of Russia from serfdom, a condition of bondage distinguished in theory only from slavery, seemed, however, so appallingly difficult that both Alexander I. and his brother Nicholas lacked the courage to try to solve it. Any student of the growth of factory legislation in England during the last century will readily comprehend how slow must have been the progress of the emancipation movement in Russian society. But the problem which was too difficult for his father and his uncle was left as a heritage to Alexander II., who when he ascended the throne may be described as a disillusioned young man, disappointed in the traditional methods of his predecessors, deserted by the former friends and allies of his father, and not too

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trustful of his own people. Educated, as he had been by the idealist poet, Joukovski, and brought up by a father who never relaxed his iron discipline to his death, who had gone near ruining his son's splendid constitution by over-work, and had taught him that the whole burden of the State lay on his own shoulders, and that there was nobody in the Empire who could be trusted to relieve him of any part of that burden, young Alexander had grown up to be somewhat of a cynic. He discounted the idealism of his father as much as he suspected the sincerity of the school of liberal thinkers who had some few years ago brought the whole of Europe to the verge of revolution.

Elegant, gentlemanly, highly cultured, rather indolent and easy-going, but most kindly good natured and well disposed towards all the world, for which, by the way, he had a sort of tolerant contempt, Alexander II. found himself on ascending the throne faced with the problem of having to save and redeem his country. He succeeded in bringing the senseless Crimean War to a speedy termination, thanks to very intelligent diplomacy, and then started tackling those internal reforms which insisted on being made. The war had revealed to the whole of Russia that the old order was antiquated and rotten, and must go, but the new order which was to take its place had yet to be evolved. There is no space in this brief review of the development of the modern Russian State to dwell on the various influences at work in those days. Suffice it to say

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that within an almost incredibly short time, barely five years, the whole structure of Russian society was remodelled, and this without friction or untoward incident, and on lines that can only be described as liberal in the extreme. The peasant was not only given his freedom, but he was also given land, and in order that he might not lightly lose his suddenly-acquired property, it was not given to him individually, but to the village commune collectively. The emancipation of the serf, moreover, carried with it in its train the institution of open oral law courts, at which cases were conducted in the eye of the public, and trial by jury was first introduced. The principle of self-government was also recognised, but not in political matters—these were hardly the concern of the uneducated people—solely in local questions. Thus Russia possessed Zemstvos on which peasants sat and voted quite a generation before we in England had County Councils and a Local Government Act.

The benefits derived from these reforms were great. Russia progressed by leaps and bounds, but like all human effort, the new methods were found to be imperfect. Some people were disappointed because the reforms did not go far enough, others were disgusted because they went too far. In the midst of dissatisfaction and troubles of various kinds, amongst which the attempts at the public assassination of the Emperor, an unheard-of thing hitherto, were not the least disconcerting, the Panslavist



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party engineered the Russo-Turkish War. When, after its victorious conclusion, the people discovered that whilst they had been fighting for the political liberation of their brother Slavs in the Balkans they themselves were to receive no further political privileges, the dissatisfaction was great, and Russia was on the verge of revolution. It was at that critical moment that the Emperor was reputed to have approved a draft constitution which he was about to sign when he was murdered. His son and successor, Alexander III., had but little sympathy with political ideas, but was endowed with strong common sense. He saw that what Russia required was a period of rest wherein to recuperate and develop her resources. Under his somewhat reactionary rule Russia was firmly but quietly governed, while his son, Nicholas II., has placed the crown on the edifice of the Russian Commonwealth by creating a Duma, literally a "thinking place."

## CHAPTER II

### RELIGION

EVERY nation and every person has three kinds of religion. There is the religion of the heart, the religion of the head, and the religion of the mouth; or the religion of life, the religion of theory, and the religion of outward show. Swedenborg, a great philosopher, laid it down that all religion had relation to life, and that the religion of life was to do good. Consequently it follows that conduct is more important than anything else, or, to quote St. Paul, that "the greatest of these is charity."

The official religion of the Russian nation is described by them as the Pravoslavnaya Vera, or the Faith of True Blessedness, commonly translated as the Orthodox Greek Church. It is called the Greek Church because it reached Russia via Byzantium and Constantinople, hence it has never been subject to Rome or to the bishops of that city, who later assumed the title of Pope. In Russia every priest is a pope, but strangely enough the ordinary Russian pope lays no claim to infallibility, but is, on the contrary, a very human person, who is not only permitted, but virtually compelled, to

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marry, and who makes no pretence to immunity from human weakness. In many respects the Greek Church resembles the Roman Catholic, inasmuch as that in both Churches saints are worshipped, including the Virgin Mary, High Mass is said, the Eucharist exhibited, the confessional enforced, and monasticism permitted. There are, however, many differences between East and West, between the Greek and the Roman Churches. We will commence with the most obvious things. In the first place the church architecture is entirely different. In Western Europe the principal characteristics of the churches are the spire and the aisle, both suggestive of the forest. The interior of a Western church is always reminiscent of a majestic grove of trees. In Russia the principal feature of the church is its dome. Generally a Russian church is like nothing so much as a cruet-stand or a cluster of towers surmounted by dome-like cupolas, these are preferably gilt or silvered, though more frequently they are painted green or blue. In the interior the idea of the aisle is not followed. The space is square. The altar is separated from the public by gates, which are only flung open at certain times. There are no seats, the congregation stands, and although the good offices of the saints are propitiated by wax candles, as in the West, the service is vocal, unaided by instrumental music, the only organ is the human voice. The choir sing a chant not altogether unlike the Gregorian, but more importance is attached to the

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bass than to the treble. The language in which the service is conducted and in which the gospels are read is archaic, and called Church Slavonic, but it is understood by the congregation, and is almost identical with Bulgarian. It is not a totally different language, such as *e.g.* Latin. Sermons are the exception, and vespers are always on the eve of the day on which the morning service is held. Vespers are called "all-night" services, although this is a misnomer. It is therefore usual for Russians to go to church on Saturday evenings as well as Sunday mornings, but there are no Sunday evening services. The most important feast in the Russian Church is not Christmas, as with us, but Easter, the feast of promise, of hope and of glory. On Easter Sunday people salute each other with the words, "Christ has risen," to which the reply is, "He has risen in very truth," whereupon the two embrace, kissing each other three times. The Easter egg is, of course, the symbol at once of eternity and the immortality of the soul.

It is on Easter Saturday that the all-night vesper becomes an all-night service in fact as well as in name. The devout Russian fasts from Good Friday until Easter Sunday by abstaining from all food, and in the small hours of Easter Sunday there is a joyous supper to which all are bidden, and at which roast sucking-pig, ham, hard-boiled eggs and a special kind of cake made of cream or curds and plums play an important role. The joyousness



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of Easter morning in Russia is something that must be experienced to be understood. Generally the snow is still on the ground, but the weather is comparatively mild, there is a vague sense of spring in the crisp night air, the church bells pour forth their jubilant peals, and crowds of happy people shouting, "Christ has risen!" joyfully flock from house to house embracing each other as they meet. The happiness is not assumed, it is real, for it has a physical, a gross, as well as a spiritual side. During the six weeks of Lent, and more especially during Passion week, the pious Russian has kept stringent fast, he has abstained from meat of any kind, from butter, eggs, and on certain days even from fish; his food has consisted principally of a kind of porridge, called kasha, mushrooms, pickled cucumbers, preserved apples and black bread. In place of butter linseed oil is used. Relief from so austere a diet is, it is needless to say, subject for congratulation, and inspires cheerfulness.

The Russian confessional is a very different sort of thing from the Roman Catholic. Le Roy Beaulieu, in his very interesting book on Russia, devotes an entire volume to the religion of the people, and describes how a regiment of soldiers are confessed and receive absolution before being admitted to communion at Easter. The priest stands in front of the ranks, and shouts at the men, asking them whether they have committed the cardinal sins for which absolution must be obtained,

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mentioning each by name. The regulation reply by each soldier is the simple but profoundly philosophical answer, "I am a sinner," whereupon without further ado absolution is granted. Members of the Orthodox Church must confess at least once a year, preparatory to taking communion at Easter. Of course, anybody who has a sin on his conscience can go to a priest at any time, confess and obtain relief. But the ordinary confession is annual. From this it will be seen that in Russia the confessional does not play so great a part in the life of the people as it does in Roman Catholic countries. Nor is the status of the priest the same.

In Russia the priest is but the Clerk in Holy Orders, the minister of religion. He is the official who performs the necessary religious duties, beyond that he has but little influence, moreover he is largely dependent on his parishioners for his living. For the numerous rites which he has to perform, such as blessing the house at stated intervals, christening, marrying and burying, to say nothing of various incidental ceremonies, he receives fees in proportion to the wealth of the persons concerned. His parishioners pay him tithe, and consequently, generally speaking, the priest is in the unfortunate position of being dependent more or less on the bounty of his congregation. He formerly constituted a class by himself. The priesthood was transmitted from father to son. Priests only married the daughters of priests, and all the sons of priests

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were compelled to embrace the ecclesiastical profession. This state of things, with its many disadvantages, has been abolished for over fifty years, and the clergy are no longer a close fraternity. To-day the sons of priests enter the liberal professions, and help to swell the ever-increasing numbers of the once non-existent middle classes.

As the Russian priest must marry before he can get a parish, he generally marries the vicar's daughter, and thus through the influence of his father-in-law obtains preferment. He must not marry again, and when he loses his wife it is not unusual for him to take vows and enter a monastery, for the clergy of Russia are divided into two categories, the white and the black. The parochial or white clergy must marry, but while married can hope for no promotion in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; it is only to the monks, the black clergy, that the higher walks are open. Of course, this is a rule to which many eminent exceptions may be quoted.

On feast days and holidays the priest, attended by his deacons and other satellites, calls on his parishioners, chants a prayer, and is invited to the hospitable board, and receives a handsome present as well. Unfortunately the temptations are great, and before Russia was compulsorily converted to temperance, as she had previously been converted to Christianity when the Grand-Duke Vladimir had his soldiers baptised on parade, the visitant priest often imbibed more than was good for him, and by

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the time his round was drawing to an end his gait had become strangely unsteady, and his ministrations were sadly lacking in coherence.

Pictures of staggering, jovial, drunken priests visiting equally jovial peasants and merchants abound in Russian galleries, and the Russian pope may safely be described as anything but an object of reverence. The strange thing about this is that the unworthiness of the minister never had the effect of bringing his religion into contempt with the simple-minded peasant, who was able to differentiate between the minister and his religion, just as he differentiated between the corrupt official and the just and benevolent Emperor.

Under Alexander III. and his minister, the Procurer of the Holy Synod, the late M. Pobedonostzev, the status of the clergy was much improved, and their tone greatly raised. Coincidentally there has on the one side been an increase of fanaticism and religious intolerance, and on the other a tendency towards indifference to all religious matters, and a drifting towards irreligion, not to say atheism. The Russian peasant, who has been unspoilt by contact with big cities and the demoralising influences of factory life, is still fundamentally a man of profound religious feeling and sentiment, though perhaps his doctrinal tenets are of the vaguest. It may be argued that his religion is not untinged with superstition, but on the other hand it must be admitted that just as one of the most beautiful



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features of the Russian Church is its charity, its hostility to all spiritual pride and arrogance of faith, and its injunction and practice of Christian humility in the fullest sense, so is the open-hearted and simple charity of the Russian peasant one of his most lovable characteristics. Nobody who asks a Russian peasant to do anything *Christa radyi*—for Christ's sake—will meet with a refusal. I have myself heard peasants debating with themselves, and arguing that they had been appealed to for Christ's sake, and that therefore they could not refuse. To ask alms in Russia is not described as begging, but as asking for Christ's sake.

The relation of the Church to the autocracy is a very interesting problem. As is usually the case in all countries, the Church has in Russia endeavoured to secure temporal power for itself, and to make itself independent of the temporal government, but in these attempts it has consistently and handsomely failed. The Church in Russia owes its position entirely to the rulers of the country, and it would be a bad day for Russia and her Church should these conditions ever be changed. Russia was converted to Christianity by that picturesque Grand Duke who caused his soldiers to be baptised on parade. Ever since the Church has been made to feel that she owed her existence in Russia to the ruler of the State.

When Peter the Great constituted the Holy Synod he made the Church a department of the State, and as he was the autocrat of the State it followed

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that he was head of the Church. Under the Empress Elizabeth the Church began to rear its head and become powerful, but Peter III. on his accession immediately set to work to make it feel the weight of his autocratic heel by proposing to deprive the monasteries of their lands, and by ordaining that parish priests should in future shave their beards, cut short their hair, and wear the unostentatious dress of the Lutheran pastors. This edict nearly caused a revolution, for the costume of the Russian priest is one of those institutions hallowed by custom which the people would not consent to see altered. It may here be stated that the dress and appearance of the Russian priest is a direct imitation of the pictures of our Saviour—the long flowing robe, the full untrimmed beard, the hair hanging down to the shoulders, these are the outward and visible signs of the priestly official, and though they have failed to command respect for the person, they always awaken a reverence for the office.

Catherine II. when she ascended the throne was wise enough to conciliate the clergy, and to repeal the edicts of her half-witted spouse, but as soon as she felt herself sufficiently securely seated on the throne she did not hesitate to make the bishops and higher church dignitaries fully understand that they owed unhesitating obedience to her.

The Church did not again make any serious attempt to assert itself until the Panslavist movement in the reign of Alexander II. His son, who advanced



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Pobedonostzev, and was to a large extent in sympathy with the practical side of Panslavism, did not, however, show any disposition to encourage sacerdotalism, or to allow the Church to usurp political power.

A great deal of exaggerated importance has been attached by non-Russian writers to the dissenters in that Empire, but these are far less important than the general public have been led to believe. The principal dissenters are the Staro-Vyeri, or Old Believers, who still resist the reforms introduced into the liturgy by the Patriarch Nikae. The modern Old Believers use the forefinger and the middle finger in making the sign of the cross, instead of using the thumb as well.

When the State adopted the liturgy introduced by Nikae, in order to do away with what were regarded as popular errors which custom had permitted to creep in, the conservative elected to reject the innovations, and were subsequently subjected to persecution. To avoid this, as is recorded by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, in his unrivalled book on Russia, they used to shut themselves up in their houses and burn themselves to death. In spite of such heroic procedure their descendants have survived. The Old Believers are no longer persecuted to-day, although they are not recognised either. They are nevertheless greatly respected for their extreme uprightness of conduct and purity of life. They have one remarkable custom, which is probably traceable to sanitary rather

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than theological precepts. Each Old Believer eats out of his own individual separate plate, and drinks out of a glass or a cup that belongs solely to him. Anybody else eating out of a plate or drinking out of a cup or glass belonging to another defiles it, and renders it filthy or "pagan," whereupon it must be destroyed. No amount of washing can wipe away the pollution.

Another very inoffensive sect are the Molokane, or milk drinkers. These harmless people will not kill animals for food, and are vegetarians and teetotallers, subsisting principally on milk. Some of them have strange delusions, and even hold that as Adam and Eve when they lived in the Garden of Eden were innocent as long as they remained nude, clothing must be the root of all sinfulness, and so go about in a state of nature. Some of these when they emigrated to Canada got into serious trouble with the local authorities and police for obstinately refusing to put on any garments whatsoever. They also object to serve in the army and to pay tribute to Cæsar. They have, in consequence, suffered much hardship from unsympathetic officials. There are several colonies of Molokanes in Transcaucasia, where I have seen them in their exceptionally neat and clean villages surrounded by an atmosphere of prosperity and purity quite touching in its simplicity; but all the Molokane I have seen were neatly and even picturesquely clothed, and exhibited no signs of eccentricity.

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There are other far more objectionable sects, such as the Skoptsi, the self-mutilators, who destroy the fecundity of the sexes, and consequently can only perpetuate their sect by proselytising. This sect is, of course, under the ban of the State, but its secret votaries are very influential, they belong mainly to the commercial classes, and exhibit an extraordinary gift for amassing wealth.

A sect which is if possible even more objectionable than the Skoptsi, is that of the Khlistuni, whose strange nocturnal rites are somewhat akin to those of the Shakers, but are supposed to be obscene as well. This sect is on the decline, and although I have heard of it, I have never in the course of my long sojourning and numerous travels in Russia come across any of its votaries.

The attitude of the Russian State towards the religious beliefs of its subjects has been described by the late M. Pobedonostzev, whom Mr. Stead called the Torquemada of Russia, as tolerant, and in a sense that is true. Foreign races may profess any faith they like—Mohammedans, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and indeed all conceivable religions are tolerated in Russia, including the Jewish, but on certain conditions. No proselytising is permitted, and no orthodox Christian is allowed to change his religion. Once a Russian always a Russian is the dictum of the Russian State and the Russian Church alike. For all that, the Russian people are quite as prone as we to adopt what in military language is

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called "fancy religions," and no doubt in time, as the liberty of the subject grows and develops there, there will be as absolute a freedom of religious belief as there is in Great Britain or even in the United States. After all, truth has a tendency to manifest itself in a variety of forms, and it is safe to say that human fallibility will find a way of twisting error and falsity round every such manifestation, however pure and unadulterated it may have originally been.

The attitude of the Russian State to the Jews must at once be admitted to have been illiberal and narrow-minded, but just as there are two sides to every question, so there is also something to be said for the Russian Government; on the other hand, nothing can justify the pogroms which were introduced by a reactionary party with a specific object.



### CHAPTER III

#### ARISTOCRACY AND THE TCHIN

MANY writers about Russia, especially those who know nothing concerning their subject, are fond of talking of the noble class and the heavy hand of the aristocracy, and how necessary it is to break down their power before there can be any hope for the poor down-trodden millions, the Russian masses. All this is the most utter nonsense. The Russian nobility have done more for the freedom of Russia's millions than any other class, and they can be truthfully described as being absolutely powerless and helpless in the Russian State.

Of course, the Russian nobility can in a large number of instances claim descent from the old Boyars of Muscovy, but it is a mistake to suppose that these ever had any corporate power or feudal status. Russia during the Middle Ages was untouched by the chivalry of the West. Russian nobles owed their dignity, their wealth and their power to the favour of their Grand-Dukes and Tzars, who as incontinently and suddenly denuded them of all these benefits as they conferred them. Ivan the Terrible would not tolerate any nobleman by his

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side who was not his abject slave, and Peter the Great literally made his nobles tremble in his presence. He was very powerful and no respecter of persons, and would soundly belabour with his stick before the whole court any nobleman, no matter how exalted, who incurred his displeasure. Moreover, he advanced to high positions people of obscure origin, like Menshikoff, who is said to have sold pies in the street as a boy, and people of foreign birth and nationality. He was surrounded by Dutchmen, Germans, Scotchmen, Frenchmen, and adventurers from every clime, including a negro, the ancestor of the famous poet Pushkin. He also created a number of foreign titles such as had never been heard of in Russia before, counts and barons, and exotic dignitaries of that kind. But Peter the Great's main object was to reform his country, and he knew that he could not trust his conservative and reactionary Boyars to uphold and perpetuate the innovations he had introduced. For this purpose an entirely new race of beings had to be created, who would owe their career to this new order of things, and would therefore be interested in maintaining it.

In direct opposition to the aristocracy, Peter the Great created a bureaucracy, which he called the Tchín, or Rank, which he recruited from all sources and which he organised into a sort of administrative army. To give the Tchín its coherence he devised a Table of Ranks, in which he co-ordinated the civilian titles, he proposed to confer with those of the army.



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There were officials whose civilian rank was equal to that of a general in the army, others who were only the equivalents of colonels, majors, captains, and so on down to cornets. The civilian ranks were borrowed from the German; these were actual privy councillors, state councillors, assessors, etc., etc. These civilian dignities, however, could only be conferred on persons actually in the service of the State. Honorary titles did not exist, empty forms were abhorrent to Peter. He wanted his nobles to work and assist him in his self-appointed task of re-organising the Empire. That could only be done by luring them, by offering inducements. These took the form of privileges, one of the most important of which was a theoretical exemption from corporal punishment. In practice everybody, no matter what his rank might be, sooner or later felt the weight of Peter's cane, but at least he was exempt from being publicly flogged, a very painful and exhausting process in those days, which people occasionally did not survive. No member of the Tchin could be thus punished without being first deprived by sentence of the court of his civil rights. But the members of the aristocracy, no matter how wealthy or how influential, could not come within this category unless they entered the government service in some capacity or other, and thus took a step on the ladder of the Table of Ranks. Such entrance was by examination only, and though these examinations were not what would have been called stiff by contemporary foreigners,

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they nevertheless caused the unfortunate candidates many a headache.

The Tchin did not only confer rank, privileges, and in some cases even the title of Excellency, it also conferred nobility. The servant of the State who attained the rank of general conferred the rank of nobility on his children, and had the privilege later of having them educated in specially aristocratic public schools, like the Corps des Pages, for instance. The old nobility who stood aloof or who failed to pass the necessary examinations, on the other hand, were not only debarred these privileges, but their children lost their title to nobility; thus the Boyars died out, and the Emperor was the sole fountain of honour. The idea of making everybody of consequence serve the State was, of course, based on the old feudal conception of society, according to which everybody of consequence in return for the enjoyment of his land had to perform certain duties. As the feudal institutions fell into abeyance in France, and the nobles became so powerful that they refused to do homage to their king and liege lord, and in many cases even defied him, like Charles the Bold, Cardinal Richelieu, in order to weaken them, turned them into courtiers, until it became possible in the following reign for Louis XIV. to say, "*L'état c'est moi.*" Frederick I. of Prussia had copied the methods of his great exemplar and pattern, and when Peter the Great visited Western Europe he found in Germany and France a system which he endeavoured

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to copy, improve and transplant into his own country. However, in those simple and spacious days the government of the country was beset with fewer difficulties than it is at present.

The bulk of the population of Russia were peasants, who in the course of years had become little better than slaves, so much live-stock owned by the owner of the soil, and regarded as part and parcel of his estate and inseparable from the land. So much was this the case, that landowners were commonly described, not as owning such and such an area of land, as they are with us, but as possessing so many souls. The possession of "souls" did not carry a title with it, and hence it is misleading to describe the country gentry of Russia as its nobility; but in course of time these country gentry acquired court privileges, and were hence called *dvoryani*, or courtiers, as well as *pomeystchicki*, or land-owners, yet the *dvoryanin* was not necessarily a *pomeystchick* nor was the *pomeystchick ipso facto* a *dvoryanin*. But the fact that the country-side belonged to country gentlemen who were the masters of the peasants tilling the soil greatly simplified the problem of government, and gave an extraordinary elasticity to the revenues of the country. The army of officials required in a modern civilised state was not needed in those early days, when the country was divided into provinces or governments, as they were and are still called, each such government being under a governor-general, a sort of petty viceroy, whose chancellory reproduced

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in miniature the departments of the State. The gentry were responsible to these governors for the roads and bridges and for the conduct of their serfs. As the complications of civilisation increased, the problem of government grew more difficult, and the army of officials kept increasing. In the old eighteenth-century days there would not have been a sufficient number of educated Russians to fill the numerous posts which the Russian Civil Service now has in its gift. In a self-governing country like England a great part of the local government is performed by unpaid persons, but even in England an increase in the number of salaried officials employed by the State has of late years been noticeable.

Catherine II., the Great, endeavoured to give the nobility of Russia a status and privileges. She introduced the system of election of Marshals of Nobility, by means of which the country gentry of a district elected their own presidents and office-bearers from their midst, who became their official representatives and spokesmen, and thus was introduced the thin end of the wedge of representative institutions and the germ of self-government. These assemblies of nobles exercised a great influence over rural life, and developed into the cradle of Russian rural local government.

By giving the country gentry assemblies and marshals or elected presidents, Catherine the Great put a sort of corporate life into this very important section of the community, from a revenue point of



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view perhaps the only class who really mattered, and made them conscious not only of their importance, but also, and more especially, of their duties and responsibilities. Catherine, who posed as a philosopher and a humanitarian, has been accused of hypocrisy and insincerity, because her critics have charged her with neglecting the welfare of the peasantry and fostering and encouraging the gentry. These are, after all, but shallow critics. Catherine worked very hard to reform the State over which accident had made her the ruler, but she clearly saw that it was hopeless to endeavour to enlighten the peasantry before she had succeeded in awakening a sense of responsibility and duty in the breasts of the country gentlemen. Culture filters down, more especially in autocratically-governed countries, and it was necessary to reclaim and regenerate, or perhaps even to create, the Russian gentleman before the masses could be reached. These were at least the lines on which Catherine worked, and her method, judged in the light of later events, cannot with justice be pronounced unprogressive or sweepingly condemned.

There is, however, another side of the picture of Catherine's administration which is perhaps less unobjectionable. Catherine was a woman, and women are supposed to be illogical. Be that how it may, Catherine combined with her very acute reasoning powers large quantities of the salt of humour and mother wit, and sometimes her sense of humour

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approached perilously near the precipice of cynicism. The salaried officials of the State must be paid salaries, that is clearly an axiom, and these salaries can only be derived from the revenues of the country ; in other words, the people must be taxed to pay the officials who govern them. To Catherine's mind there was presented a compromise. It was true that officials must be paid out of revenue, but why incur the odium of high taxation by making these salaries adequate ? There are two sources of revenue in a State, one is derived from direct taxes, the other from what is called indirect taxation. Catherine at first strove to put down bribery and corruption, but found these vices so deeply seated in the government that she was powerless to root them out. She therefore, whilst continuing to protest, tacitly winked at them. Knowing her people and her country, she recognised the hopelessness of her self-imposed task, but she determined to turn this inherent weakness of the government to the benefit of the nation. If officials accepted bribes and gratuities as a regular thing, and if it was hopeless to put a stop to such practices, why not take this circumstance into account in fixing their salaries ? Why not let the officials have two salaries, the recognised and inadequate salary derived from direct taxation, and the irregular, unrecognised income derived from the indirect taxation of the public ?

The consequences were disastrous. The system took hold of the country and permeated every service.



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Not only did the police and similar licensed social leeches prey on the body politic, but the army and the navy followed suit. So well was the system recognised that nobody was shocked or scandalised. When the case of an impoverished nobleman was represented to Catherine, she is reported to have replied, "How stupid! Did he not have command of a regiment for years? How can I help people who will not help themselves?"

Alexander I. when he ascended the throne endeavoured to stamp out this crying evil, but the well-meant efforts of this ingenuous monarch were not very effective, and his favourites, such as the infamous General Arakcheyev, were successful in hoodwinking their confiding ruler. Nicholas I. was more drastic in his methods, but had fewer illusions, and knew perfectly well that his intermittent *deus ex machina* methods were as little efficacious as the self-deceptions of his brother. He used to say that there were only three honest men in Russia: himself, his eldest son and heir, and General Wilson, the Scottish engineer whom he had imported to found ironworks for the State.

In more recent times, although it would be an exaggeration to say that corruption had been rooted out, it is nevertheless far milder in its forms and much less dangerous to the State.

I knew an Englishman in Moscow whose father was a surgeon in Cronstadt when the Crimean War broke out. He used to tell me that when Sir Charles

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Napier sailed up the Baltic with a British fleet the Russians had their hearts in their mouths. They thought that St. Petersburg was bound to fall, for they knew that the imposing guns which were mounted on the "impregnable" Cronstadt forts were made of wood and painted to look formidable, although the State had paid for the genuine article. But then, fortunately for the responsible parties, Sir Charles Napier did not know this.

There are many stories about the army and the navy of those days which are hardly credible. But to-day things are changed. When I last visited Russia, a few months before the war, I heard from all quarters that the army, for instance, had been entirely purified by the energetic uprightness of the Grand-Duke Nicholas, and that generally speaking the back-door influences which had previously been brought to bear had been swept away.

These are, of course, the tragic forms of corruption, the grand dramas of bribery. In the humbler walks, the comedy and farce of official life, there is also far greater purity. After all it is largely a question of custom and remuneration. When I was a boy in Moscow there lived next door to us a lieutenant of police. He was always attired in the newest of uniforms. His children were elegantly dressed, they had a very smart French governess, and generally lived in a comfortable style. Their father had a really splendid turn-out, and when he drove through the streets his horses, his driver, and his furs and

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waxed moustache were a sight to see. He was highly esteemed and regarded generally as a harmless and amiable man, but his salary was barely as much as his rent, and to suppose that he could live on it never entered anybody's head. He had no private means, but thrived and lived in clover, thanks to "indirect taxation." The various tradesmen made him regular presents, and he had more sources of revenue than the ordinary imagination could conjure up. It was the custom of the country, and the easy-going world was not censorious. His superiors showed him the example. They were all corrupt, but genial and good-natured in spite or perhaps in consequence of the system. In more recent years I have found the police officials to be far less prone to accept presents, their salaries have been increased, and they are less exposed to temptation. On the other hand, these presents and good-will offerings can scarcely be regarded as bribery, they are part of an elastic system. I am credibly informed that in democratic New York the state of things is much worse and far less bearable.

In the bad old days, however, the official system had many unlovely sides, and was directly responsible for keeping back the development of the country. A friend of mine, for instance, informed me that many years ago an application was made in the usual manner to the governor of one of the provinces of Siberia for permission to work and exploit the petroleum in a certain district. When the

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governor's secretary brought this petition to the notice of his chief the latter flew into a fury, and replied that there was no oil in that region, and that the petition should therefore be rejected. The secretary ventured to point out that on the contrary the region abounded in oil. At this the fury of the governor became almost ungovernable. When he had recovered some little self-possession, he found words to express his feelings: "Aren't you comfortable here? Aren't we all working together very nicely? Presently we shall no doubt get promoted, and do better still. Then why have this place spoilt with all sorts of engineers, and people coming here and making a fuss and reporting against us and queering our pitch? No, my friend, there is no oil in this region, and there won't be as long as I am governor-general."

A great deal is made of such stories as these, but after all they do nothing more than reveal the *vis inertia* of the Russian official mind. Nor is the Russian official singular in this respect. Even in impeccable Germany the incorruptible Prussian bureaucracy has betrayed its human weakness: witness the Borkum scandals and the Krupp revelations. Two blacks do not make a white, but it is rather unfair to assume that Russia is the only country in which officials are amenable to subtle arguments, and to shut our eyes to the peccadilloes of the rest of Europe. It is not so long ago that a Secret Commissions Act was passed in this country,



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although I doubt whether people can be made virtuous by Act of Parliament.

To turn from this unsavoury side of public life, it is deserving of note that advancement in Russia is by merit and not by favour, and that Russia is the most democratic of countries, where every career is open to those who have the ability to pass the necessary examinations.

## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION

As stated in the previous chapter, Russia is a democratic country which has opened the career of the public service to the talents. Much has been done in Russia to stimulate education, for the rulers of the Empire have always felt the want of educated men to help them to govern the millions of subjects confided to their care. It was the unceasing complaint of Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, Alexander I. and Nicholas I. that they could not find administrators. Catherine used to train her lovers and make statesmen of them, but this is a method on which it is difficult to found a system. With the emancipation of the serfs, and the break-up of the ecclesiastical caste, a new and inexhaustible supply of brains was set free. Everything was done to encourage education. Wealthy people founded scholarships, as we should call them, in Russia they were given the names of stipends, and the Government arranged a system of exhibitions by means of which intelligent youths could work their way up and conquer free education. Money was not plentiful, and the stipends were in the majority of cases even less adequate than the paltry salaries of the officials.



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It was obvious that only men of grit, young fellows possessing a fanaticism for learning, comparable only to the devotion of the early Christian martyrs, could persevere in so hard a school. Some of the benevolent founded seminaries for stipendiary students, where they were lodged and fed for a purely nominal sum; but these were not sufficient to accommodate all, for the reforms of 1861, as the emancipation of the serfs and its attendant measures were called, had awakened a yearning for education and improvement, and given rise to hopes and dreams which were quite impracticable and entirely visionary, and while creating a highly-intellectual class of young men, were bound to lead to disappointment and despondency. The hardships which these young martyrs of education voluntarily underwent are scarcely conceivable to the comfortably housed and clothed and well-fed middle classes of this prosperous country. As many as fifteen students have been known to inhabit one room. In this they clubbed together, often possessing but one complete outfit amongst them, so that while one of their number was deputed to attend the lectures at the University and take verbatim short-hand notes for the benefit of the others, the remaining fourteen stayed at home in bed copying and studying the notes of the lectures of the previous day. Young men capable of such heroism possessed force of character and will-power of no ordinary kind. It is the fashion to describe the Russian as naturally indolent and slothful, but

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the pursuit of learning under such conditions is not compatible with laziness. Of course, all the students were not equally penurious. Some were able to add to their incomes by giving lessons, others followed kindred occupations, such as copying, short-hand writing, journalism, and a variety of similar kinds of work, all poorly paid and laborious.

The educational system of Russia was copied from the German, and here it may be as well to say at once that Russia's greatest misfortune, her principal disability, has been that she has had Germany for her immediate neighbour, and that so much of Western life, manners, customs and culture had to filter through Germany before it reached her.

At the time of the re-awakening of Russia, just after the Crimean War, Germany was practically on the verge of revolution. The centrifugal force of Prussia had scarcely begun to assert itself, and the republican tendencies of the atheistic seminaries of German learning were having a distinctly disintegrating and unsettling effect on the youth of the country. Three remarkable men—William I., Bismarck and Moltke—knit Germany together, but after all, with the sentimental beer-drinking and argumentative German the radical views of that period did not penetrate very far beneath the frothy surface. It was very different with the ardent, ingenuous young Russian who had just obtained a scholarship to enable him to study at some foreign University. In the majority of cases Germany, being the nearest,

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was the country selected, and here the young and susceptible student, full of patriotic aspirations and the noblest ideals sipped the poison of Nihilism. Returning to his country with his mind perverted instead of formed, and bursting to set right the abuses and the injustice still prevailing in the land of his birth, he developed characteristics which made him quixotic and impractical. He had imbibed great generalisations, glorious subversive views, but he had acquired no common sense, had been taught no work-a-day methods of mundane life. Compromise was a word which did not exist in his dictionary. The result was disastrous. He kept tilting at windmills, and running his head against brick walls. No wonder that he could find no sphere for his activities in the rotten and corrupt society to which he returned. For to the young enthusiast and idealist every state of society is rotten, every body of people is corrupt as soon as they betray the weaknesses and fallibility inherent in human nature, and do not come up to his unattainable standard of absolute perfection. The dissatisfied young intellectuals got together, brooded over their wrongs, and became malcontents and revolutionaries. Their effervescent Nihilism was unfortunately taken seriously by the unimaginative reactionary German court clique who surrounded the Emperor Alexander II., and the consequences were what we know.

It was all very sad and very pitiable, but there was a great deal of nobility and idealism

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about these young malcontents: they formed a school, they created a class—the intellectuals—from which the professors of the universities, the writers in the newspapers, and the men of culture generally were recruited. Under Alexander III., who had but little sympathy with visionaries, these intellectuals had what our Transatlantic cousins would call “a bad time,” and gradually this cast of mind has been crushed out of Russian life. To-day the educated classes of Russia are more numerous than before, they are also more normal, and do not represent a section apart, a self-elected salt of the earth, bubbling over with pride and antagonism, as they did in the old days of the mid-seventies.

The opportunities for well-educated young men have increased enormously with the development of the material resources of the country, and the increase in the prosperity of the people and the influence and numbers of the middle classes. Yet the government services still absorb a very large majority of these young men, who are trained very much on the German system, and prepared for the career they are to embrace in the schools, high schools and universities which they attend. In Russia, as in France and Germany, education is highly specialised. Besides the purely religious schools and colleges, called seminaries, where the clergy are trained, there are classical schools, or gymnasia, modern schools, or real schools as they are called, technical schools, law schools, law colleges,



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mining, engineering and polytechnic high schools, and so on.

The average cultured Russian is a highly-educated man, who knows much about every country in the world, who has the literatures of England, France and Germany at his finger-ends, who has a warm sympathy for Italy and her national aspirations, a sneaking regard for procrastinating Spain, and an admiration of America not entirely untempered by a certain distrust of her get-rich-quick methods, but regards the growth and development of Great Britain as an object lesson to study and imitate. Yet it is to be feared that he knows very little about Russia.

But while the average Russian young man is cultured and well informed, and cosmopolitan in his education to a degree that can scarcely be credited in Western Europe, his schooling is not of the kind best calculated to fit him for the struggle of life. In this respect it rather resembles the training of the French Lycée. The boys are under constant supervision, and are not self reliant and miniature men of the world as they are in England. An attempt was made to introduce the English Public School system some years ago, but the attempt, although praiseworthy, was not sufficiently thorough-going to have any marked effect. It was made by a M. Leontiev, the right-hand man of the famous Panslavist and publicist Katkoff, but it did not go much farther than the promotion of English games amongst the

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boys and the giving of decided preference to classical studies. The strict supervision of the boys at all times and hours was not abolished, and it is to the virtual autonomy of the English Public School that the self-reliant character of the educated Englishman is so largely due.

When we turn to the technical schools we find at once an illustration of the difficulty of training youths academically in a manner to suit them to face the conditions of practical life.

Enlightened Russians who wish their sons to embrace an engineering career have told me that in spite of the fact that the passing of certain qualifying examinations places the candidate in the position of entering the technical professions and branches of the Civil Service, they prefer to have their sons trained practically in England, and that in Russia such practical training is more helpful than the hallmark of a Russian technical examination. English engineers will say the same thing, and will tell you that they attach more importance to practical training than to, say, a university degree. After all, the best school of life is life itself. In Germany, on the other hand, we know that young men are all turned out by the thousand, and manufactured wholesale into chemists, engineers, architects, etc.

What the Russian schools lack in freedom and opportunities of initiative is, however, compensated for by the universities, which are on the German model. Here the young man enjoys an amount of



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freedom and independence which is in strong contrast with the strict discipline of the schools. This sudden relaxation of discipline has, in the opinion of many, had a baneful effect on the youth of Russia, and led to much of the insubordination of which we used to hear. Of recent years greater severity has been introduced. Students have again to wear a uniform, as in the military days of Nicholas I., and are under the supervision of inspectors, who watch over their political morality. While certain reactionary statesmen regard these measures as politically necessary, it is nevertheless doubtful whether they have exercised that beneficial influence on the characters of the young men which was expected, and it may be that we shall presently see a tendency to copy British methods in the schools and universities of Russia.

One result of the present system is not altogether to be deprecated, and that is the fact that it makes charlatanism practically impossible. Nobody in Russian can follow any profession whatsoever without the possession of a diploma to show that he has passed a qualifying examination. This rule applies even to the profession of teaching. Of course, this is a great protection to the public, but in these highly-specialised times it implies that an individual must make up his mind very early in life as to the calling he intends to follow. When a man later discovers that he has little natural aptitude for the walk of life which he has chosen, it is very difficult

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for him to adopt a new profession, and hence Russia abounds in what we must call, for want of a better word, mistakes. On the other hand, the Civil Service absorbs the bulk of the educated classes, and provides them with careers. The country is huge, but the educated middle classes are comparatively few in numbers, consequently we shall find that the commercial life of the country is largely in alien hands, for the Russians cannot be spared from the services.

From what classes are the intellectuals recruited? As we have seen, Peter the Great made it incumbent on every gentleman who desired to retain his gentility to serve the State. And this idea, that it is the duty of the Russian gentleman to serve in some capacity or other, still prevails. The bulk of the civil servants of Russia used, therefore, to be recruited from the landed gentry. Since the emancipation of the serfs the net has been spread wider, and the career of State service or any of the professions has been thrown open to all who could pass the necessary examinations.

As we have seen, the priesthood have supplied a large percentage of the new blood, but humble persons, such as the children of artisans and of small tradesmen and even peasants, have been absorbed. Russia has indeed always been democratic in theory and in throwing open its prizes to all, but in the old days, when the peasants were serfs and kept to the land, and the priesthood formed a class, the sources

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from which candidates could be drawn were naturally restricted. Even to-day there is no exaggeration in saying that the majority of the officials are recruited from the class of country gentry. In the case of very large estates it is common to place the administration in the hands of an estate agent or manager, preferably a German, and for the owner to take service in the State. In other cases the land is farmed to the peasants, and frequently it is managed by one member of the family, while the others are in the towns and in official employment.

When I was a young man in Moscow all the professors at the University were what we should call country gentlemen, that is to say, that in addition to their professorial emoluments of about four hundred a year they derived a private income from their estates. This is a feature of Russian middle-class life that must not be lost sight of.

While on this subject of education it may be interesting to devote some space to female education in Russia.

Russia, which has had so many empresses, has been greatly influenced by women. Catherine the Great, who attached much importance to the refinement of the manners of her subjects, felt how necessary it was to begin with the women. Imitating the example of the great French women of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and notably Mme. de Maintenon, she formed educational institutes for the training of the daughters of the aristocracy, in order to bring

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them up as ladies. She had herself studied widely the writings of the leading philosophers of her time, and she encouraged learning and letters amongst the ladies of her court. In these excellent efforts she was later greatly aided and supported by her virtuous daughter-in-law, for whom she conceived the frankest contempt, but who nevertheless, as the wife of the Emperor Paul, and later as the mother of two successive Emperors, Alexander I. and Nicholas I., did much to perpetuate the traditions, in so far as female education was concerned, of the lax but cultured Catherine.

Thus when the great reforms of 1861, from which the national life of the country really dates, were instituted, the ground was already prepared for that tremendous impetus to female education which the reformers of that time gave it. From the first Russia admitted her women to all branches of higher education, and one of the professions which was more especially thrown open to them was that of medicine. Russian girls went through educational processes similar to those of the boys. High schools for girls were instituted which differed but little from the gymnasia of the boys, and later women were admitted to university courses, and eagerly absorbed the new ideas that were then in vogue.

The Nihilist movement owed much to women, and in every manifestation of public opinion in Russia during the last fifty years the enthusiasm, intelligence and self-sacrifice of women have played a



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large if not a leading part. The woman influence gave to these movements much of their heroic aspects, and imparted a lofty and pure tone to them which is so often absent from politics. Unfortunately too many of these movements and aspirations were unpractical and visionary.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PEASANT AND VILLAGE LIFE

THE bulk of the population of Russia is composed of peasants. It is, however, a mistake to assume that over the whole length and breadth of Russia there is no variation of type. This is scarcely correct. The peasant of Podolia and Little Russia is very different from the peasant of the Caucasus, the plains of Siberia, or the Baltic Provinces. Nevertheless, when people talk of the Russian peasant they mean a native of Russia who inhabits the vast central plains, the northern and eastern regions, and who speaks the same language and dresses practically in the same manner. It is a curious thing that the language of the Russian people varies but little whether we go to Archangel, the extreme eastern limits of Siberia, the Volga, the Black Sea, or the interior. To all practical intents and purposes there are no dialects and, moreover, no vulgarities. The Russian peasant speaks a Russian which is virtually as grammatical as the language spoken in a Russian drawing-room, and has an accent as pure as that of the most cultured and elegant aristocrat. In this respect there is a very wide difference between Russia and Western

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Europe. Germany, Italy, France and England are full of dialects, and replete with class distinctions. In England it is possible to say to what layer of society an Englishman belongs by the manner in which he talks; moreover, it is easy to determine almost as soon as he opens his mouth from what part of the country he comes. In France and Italy the same is very nearly true; and in Germany there are the Saxon, the Bavarian, the Rhenish, the North German, the Austrian, and a variety of other accents. But the vast even plains of Russian present no such sharp variations, nor are there clearly-defined class distinctions in pronunciation. The reason for the latter fact is not far to seek. In the days when gentility was developed in Russia the gentry spoke French at court and amongst themselves, and even wrote in that language, very much as they did in Germany, and as they do now in the Netherlands. The vulgar tongue, the language of the people, therefore remained untainted by affectation and conversely suffered no corruption. To-day it is possible to judge of the social position of a Russian by the manner in which he speaks French, and by his French accent. As a matter of fact, the commercial classes in Russia nearly all speak German, the gentry all speak French with varying degrees of excellence, and the smart set, the court clique, have for the last century spoken English.

But this is a digression. To return to the Russian peasant. The average Russian peasant, with the

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exception of only a few regions, such as *e.g.* the Province of Orel, is fair, blue-eyed, large boned, tall, powerful and child-like in voice and expression of countenance. He is, speaking generally, a gentle giant. The male is bearded like the pard; the woman is but little inferior in point of physique to the male, and quite as hardy and strong. Where the race has been unmixed with Tartar and Kalmuck blood, and the pure Slavonic type has been maintained, the features, if coarse, are nevertheless regular and classical, the nose straight and long, the lips full but well-shaped, the mouth large, the cheeks in the case of the woman round, like the chin, the shoulders broad, and the chest deep and full. Among the men in particular florid complexions are rare, and the women, who work in the fields quite as hard as the men, soon lose the softness of the feminine form, the plumpness of the feminine face, and betray the hardships of their lives in their looks and figures.

In 1861 every Russian peasant, with few and rare exceptions, including a comparatively small number of *odnodvortsi*, or single-courts, the equivalent of our yeomen, were serfs, the absolute personal property of the country gentleman who owned the land on which they lived, and regarded very much like the cattle and other live stock of the estate, subject to the arbitrary ill-treatment of the master, to being beaten and otherwise bullied, ignorant, illiterate, superstitious, servile, and of course totally devoid of self-reliance, initiative, or independence of spirit. It



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was an oppressed, long-suffering, gentle and submissive race, subject occasionally, of course, to inexplicable attacks of revulsion of feeling, of insubordination, rebellion and resentment, but on the whole docile, hard-working and uncomplaining.

The Russian country gentleman counted his serfs by the soul. In the vernacular the peasant was called Kristianin, and all these Christians called each other brothers. They were a simple, God-fearing, penurious people. The wants of the peasant were few, his tastes could scarcely be said to exist, his horizon was small, his gamut of human experience, of happiness, was extraordinarily limited.

That was fifty-four years ago. Since then the peasant has developed with extraordinary rapidity. He can mostly read and write, he is shrewd at a bargain, shows a distinct tendency towards an independence of spirit, an awakening of consciousness, a recognition of his responsibilities and duties, but also of his rights. Military service has broadened his outlook on life, given him a sort of university training and a knowledge of the world, made him smart and alert and tidy. Gradually he is amassing wealth, or shall we not rather say growing more comfortable? And with this increase of prosperity there is coming an increase of wants, of a demand for things formerly scarcely thought of, but now rapidly becoming necessities of life. In other words, the Russian peasant is emerging from a condition of benighted ignorance and penurious poverty into a

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flourishing state of conscious progress. He is on the up-grade.

Let us visit a normal Russian village in central Russia and see how the peasant lives. This will help us to understand his economic position.

We must begin at the beginning. We cannot approach the Russian village except by road. In the summer the main road is beautifully macadamised. The peasant knows that he pays for the up-keep of this handsome road, and therefore, like a prudent and thrifty husbandman, he uses it as little as possible. By the side of the fine *chaussée*, with its regular verst-posts, and its orderly pile of small stones at recurring intervals, its telegraph-poles and all similar signs of modern civilisation, not omitting the occasional rush of the frantic motor-car, there will be found a rugged track with two deep parallel ruts; it is this, which requires no repair, that the peasant uses, and along which his cart is slowly and laboriously drawn by his hardy and reverse from showy horses. In the winter the entire scene is changed, there is no *chaussée* nor side track, the whole country-side is covered by a mantle of snow several feet thick, and the road is now a sledge track. Through a vast expanse of whiteness is a track worn brown with use, curiously uneven, with ditches and little hillocks not unlike a switch-back railway, and here and there marked by a solitary fir tree, cut down and brought from the neighbouring forest and firmly inserted in the snow to mark the place where the track should be, for

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the snow often falls thick and fast, and will in a night obliterate the hard-beaten track, which it is nevertheless some times dangerous to leave, for horse and sledge might sink or get stuck fast in the loose, deep-lying snow.

The road leads us to the village. But the village treats this same road with as much respect as had been previously shown it by the peasant. The little wooden huts or cottages of which it is composed recede a good distance from it, leaving plenty of room for side-tracks left and right. Each little cottage has its own courtyard surrounded by palings, with outhouses, stables, etc., and these courtyards are not contiguous, there is usually a considerable interval between. Thus it comes about that the village is usually composed of a double row, one on each side of the road, of straggling cottages. We will endeavour to gain admission to one of these cottages in order to obtain an idea of a Russian interior. If our visit is made in the winter, we shall find the door covered with felt and matting to keep out the draught. In order to gain admittance it will perhaps be advisable to rap gently at one of the little windows. The door will then be opened cautiously, a head will peep out, and we shall be invited in. "We crave your favour"—"Milosty prossim," is the conventional greeting.

On the opening of the door we are at once in the dwelling-room of the peasant. It has clean, deal boards, no wall papers, no stucco ceiling, but deal

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everywhere. The cottage is usually made of logs with pieces of tow or felt in between to keep out the cold. In a corner of this room is a plain deal table, and along the walls and on two sides of it there run deal benches. Above the table in the corner of the cottage and near the ceiling hangs the ikon, a sacred picture, a small lamp suspended by cords burning in front of it. We take off our head covering, bow in the direction of the ikon, cross ourselves, invoke the blessing of God on the occupants, and are then invited to a seat on one of the benches, and if possible just under the ikon, for that is the seat of honour.

The peasant who receives us will probably be a tall, bearded man, with grey hair, grey eyes, and wrinkled, weather-beaten face, having a kindly and simple expression. He will be attired in a cotton shirt, blue, red or grey, with a sash round the waist, and falling over his cotton trousers, which have been caught at the knee by linen bands, not unlike puttees, secured by cords wound round the leg in lattice pattern after the Italian fashion. The wife of his bosom will be a fine, strapping woman, also dressed in a cotton shirt with a cotton skirt over it, coming up to the very arm-pits, no waist. The shoes of both man and woman will be of plaited rushes. No fire can be discovered in the room, but there is a huge baker's oven in the centre, surrounded by shelves on which the family sleep.

Immediately on our arrival the samovar will be put up for the boiling of water, and presently tea will be



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offered. The tea is made in a china pot, and poured into glasses. Milk is not usual, but there will be sugar, perhaps a lemon, possibly some rusks, and certainly jam, home-made, most excellent and toothsome black bread, coarse salt, probably no butter. The more substantial meal is served in a big bowl, it consists of kasha, a kind of porridge, very sustaining and succulent. Meat is generally boiled in a sort of stew or soup. Everybody sits round the table and is armed with a wooden spoon, which is dipped into the bowl, and the resultant catch is then at once conveyed to the mouth. You will find the peasant surrounded by his sons and daughters and daughters-in-law and his grand-children, all dressed in cotton. When he goes out in the winter he puts on large felt boots which reach to his knees and are very warm. He has either a sheepskin, with the wool inside, or a freize coat of a material very similar to the felt in his boots, which is quite impervious to cold. On his head he has a wadded cap which sinks over his ears, and with his lpty, or wool-lined leather gloves, in which there are no divisions for the fingers, only a separate piece for the thumb, he can defy any weather. His wife is similarly arrayed, except that she wears a decent woollen shawl neatly wrapped round her head.

The walls of the hut are not papered, and are devoid of ornament; but the Russian native love of colour will come out, and hence we find pasted upon these bare walls weird, garish-coloured prints, representing

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the tortures of hell, the happiness of heaven, episodes from the lives of the saints, the exploits of legendary heroes, and also battle pictures of fights with Turks and Japanese, portraits of the Emperor and the Empress, and, still in places, of the famous General Skobeleff, whom the Russian people idolised.

Some agricultural instruments and workshop tools will be found about the cottage. Dogs and cats are not unknown, although the former are rarely admitted into the precincts of the dwelling-house, for they are considered unclean.

Every Saturday the Russian turns his cottage into a sort of vapour bath, and steams and washes himself in the stove. In the long winter months in some parts of Russia village industries are followed, and the peasants turn out a number of useful and fancy articles, some of which are beginning to find a ready sale even in England. The toy industry is likely to receive a great stimulus from the war with Germany. There is also a considerable metal and cutlery industry, and in some regions even parts of machinery are turned out. Unfortunately much of this labour is sweated, and in the hands of usurers, who are called Koulaki, or fists, because they terrorise and grind down their victims.

There exists a very widely-disseminated theory that the Russian peasant is addicted to vodka, and that the recent total abolition edicts were absolutely necessary in order to save the country from itself, or, in other words, from alcoholism, and it was once

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the fashion to say that the Russians, as a nation, were drinking themselves into prosperity. Had this indeed been the case the introduction of compulsory temperance would have been attended with much greater difficulties. As a matter of fact, the Russian peasant is not so far removed from grace as the majority of the British public imagine. In his ordinary every-day life he tastes no alcohol. Tea, water, and a tasteless drink somewhat resembling small-beer, but without any alcohol contents whatever, and called kvass, are the national beverages; vodka, literally "little water," a term of endearment, is resorted to in order to bring gaiety and happiness into otherwise dull and grey lives. In his days of servitude and misery the peasant drank vodka to drown care. On high days and festivals, when it was desired to be jovial and happy, the peasant sought in the bottle the oblivion from his surroundings which nothing else could give. Drunkenness became synonymous with happiness, and to be drunk was compared with being in heaven. On ordinary work-days the peasant is sober, it is only on holidays that he gets drunk, and then a very small quantity of vodka suffices to intoxicate him. I have known a peasant get drunk on one wine-glass of vodka, although this spirit is certainly no more potent than gin. Unfortunately Russia has too many holidays. To-day the peasant is in a far happier condition than he was fifty years ago, and drink is no longer indispensable to drown care. Thus it was possible

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to abolish the use of stimulants without creating a revolution.

We have seen how simple the life of the village is, how small are the wants of the peasant, but it must not be supposed that the resources of modern civilisation are not rapidly changing these old and primitive conditions. Every year, there is no exaggeration in saying, the wants of the peasant grow, and he is thus beginning to discover that there are other sources of enjoyment besides getting drunk.

When the peasant was emancipated he was given land to cultivate, which was taken from the country gentleman, but in order that the country gentleman should not be deprived of labour, the land thus expropriated was insufficient to keep the peasant, he was compelled to work for the gentleman in order to live. Moreover, it was feared that if the peasant was made absolute proprietor of the land he tilled he might easily be induced to part with it and thus become pauperised. To prevent so grievous a national calamity as the wholesale pauperisation of the people, the land was made the property, not of the individual, but of the village community, or mir, which was also the unit of local government. This system did not work satisfactorily, and in recent years this communal land tenure has been abolished, and the peasant constituted the proprietor of his own land. The mir still remains as the parish council, the county council being the zemstvo. Another quaint village institution was the krougovaya



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porouka, or system of mutual guarantees, by means of which the entire village, and not the individual, was responsible for the taxes. This system led to abuses, and has gone to the limbo of the past with the mir. The zemsky natchalnik, or rural chief, still remains. This is a curious office. When the peasant was emancipated it was felt that he would require guidance in mundane affairs, and especially in his relations with his fellow-peasants, and consequently he was given an official counsellor and friend in the person of an honorary justice of the peace, who took the place in many respects of his former master. These justices of the peace were recruited from the country gentry, they were unpaid, and held in great respect. Under Alexander III., however, the inevitable reactionary wave set in. The justices of the peace were denounced as being too liberal in their tendencies and too lenient towards the peasant, and it was argued that this latter childlike person, so recently a serf, required to have a master set over him, and so he was put under the tutelage of a paid official, the zemsky natchalnik. This official was recruited from the same class as the justice of peace, but is not supposed to have been quite so liberal, indeed he but too often became the willing instrument of the reactionary party. For all that the office has been maintained, and has not had a baneful influence on the whole. The zemsky natchalnik has made the peasant feel that although he was emancipated from the estate owner, he

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still had a master over him, and was not entirely irresponsible.

At one time the state of the peasantry and of agriculture in Russia was causing misgivings to the governing classes. The institution of the mir, or village community, and of the krougovaya porouka, had introduced a sort of rural socialism, and was reported to have made the peasants careless and frivolous. It had also given rise to a class of peasant sweaters, who advanced the money required for taxation, sowing and similar purposes, and then oppressed the people whom they had got under their economic control. Thus, however beautiful in theory the Russian rural system might have appeared, in practice it was bringing about the very things it was supposed to avoid, namely the pauperisation of the people. Of late years all this has been changed, and the peasant is gradually becoming a normal economic unit whose prosperity or the reverse is, in theory at least, dependent on his own efforts. By such means alone can he be made a man of, and raised to better things, both materially and morally.

But little space remains to describe the manners and customs of a singularly unsophisticated and lovable people. The principal sport of the young men is to play at babki, a game which may be conveniently described as a cross between skittles and marbles. The national dances are famous, but one of their prettiest customs is the chorovod, or moving choir. On summer evenings the young girls

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of the village will form a sort of circle round the leadership of one of their number, and hand in hand move in solemn rotation, singing charming national songs under the direction of the leader. The sound of these pure, clear voices in the balmy, still air is most poetic and romantic ; it is peculiar to Russian life, and defies all attempt at description. It must be heard to be understood, no poor words of mine can conjure up the charm, the weird, plaintive melancholy, the wild joyousness, of these chants. The famous "Chanson Triste" of Tchaikovsky conveys some idea, but only of one kind, of these remarkably picturesque Russian national songs.

I have said the Russian peasant is kindly. The best proof of this will be found in the broad charity of his disposition. Nobody who asks a Russian peasant for help, *Christa radyi*—for Christ's sake—will go empty away. The criminal, once convicted and sentenced, however much he may have been execrated before, at once becomes an object of pity and charity, and as the gangs of convicts pass through a town or village collections are made on their behalf. In some parts of Russia the people are too delicate to require the gratitude or to desire to know the identity of the recipient of charity. The person in want knocks at the cottage window, places a receptacle for food on the window-sill and then conceals himself, returning after a time to find food or coin awaiting him. People with such customs have a great future before them.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WORKING CLASSES

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the peasants of Russia have still something patriarchal, primitive and innocent about them ; they are more or less like children. The working classes belong to a different order of ideas. By working classes I mean labourers working for wages and living in towns. In this class I include all casual as well as skilled labourers, and especially factory hands.

Just as the peasant is patriarchal, picturesque and altogether delightful, so is the Russian working-man, speaking of him in the mass, the reverse. He may be said to have no virtues and no religion, no self-respect and no ambition. Such is the normal Russian working-man of the old school, and the reason for his being what he is is not far to seek, and very comprehensible.

In the days before 1861 the lower classes were all serfs, as I have already stated. After their emancipation they were given land and expected to till the soil. But during the long winter months, when the ground was covered with layers upon layers of snow, what was the poor peasant to do ? Was he to sleep on his stove and hibernate like a bear ? Or was he to take



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up some handicraft and endeavour to make some article, useful or otherwise, for which he could obtain a sale? In many cases the latter was the ready solution of the problem, but it was not the universal solution. There was yet a third course to be adopted, and that was to leave his wife and family behind him and to proceed to the nearest town and find work for the winter months. Indeed, in his days of serfdom his master frequently hired him out in this way, or permitted him, against an annual payment called obrok, to follow some calling in the town. Sometimes, therefore, young fellows went off on their own in search of work, but more frequently they would organise themselves in gangs, called artels, and live on co-operative lines.

The simple Russian peasant, as we have seen, has strong leanings towards universal brotherhood and socialism. His land tenure was formerly on a communal basis, and so he naturally drifted into similar methods when away from home. The artel took the place of the mir, or village commune, and into this he would pour all his earnings, in return for which the artel engaged lodgings for him, also a cook, bought food and fuel, and housed and fed him. Whatever remained over in the coffers of the artel after food and lodging and similar necessities had been provided was distributed equally, without reference to the amount each member had contributed, amongst the gang. Here we see at a glance the rudimentary form of practical socialism.

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Thus far all would seem well. The migratory peasant is well cared for, his earnings are husbanded, he retains the simplicity of his mind and his altruistic customs. Unhappily this is only one side of the medal. There is a reverse, less attractive, less edifying. The young peasant, uprooted as it were from the soil, and turned loose with a lot of other young fellows similar to himself, away from family ties, exposed to the temptations of town life, rapidly becomes demoralised. In the majority of cases he has a wife and children, whom he has left behind, and whose existence he may even forget amidst the squalid attractions of the dissipations of the town. The mir had taken the place of the country gentleman, and the obrok had to be payed to it instead. When out of employment, or prevented by unforeseen expenditure from paying the obrok, the village commune refused to renew the passport, hence complications and eventual outlawry, for the passportless individual becomes a vagabond and an outlaw; in any case demoralisation of some sort is bound to be the consequence of this migration to the town.

I have so far been talking of casual labour only, of men who leave their native village temporarily, who become cab-drivers, water-carriers, hewers of wood, and follow similar occupations. When we turn to factory labour we find the conditions still more unpropitious. The factory hand, removed from all family influences, develops characteristics the reverse

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of lovely. His physique deteriorates, his complexion assumes an ashen pallor. He lives and works for the sole object of earning sufficient money to satisfy the craving for vodka, which has become a disease. To get drunk, to obtain oblivion or to seek a temporary artificial happiness, has become the one thing worth living for. To satisfy this craving the factory hand will do anything. He has been known to get drunk on methylated spirits and lubricating or engine oil. The family ceases to exist. Housed in insanitary barracks, his sexual relations become irregular and casual, a state of things is brought into being very similar to what might be expected to result if the apostles of free love had their way. Illegitimacy ceases to be a stigma, and thus is born and bred a race of irresponsible, irreclaimable human animals, whose lives will be far less respectable than those of monkeys in captivity. The works of Maxim Gorky show us what monsters thoughtless industrialism has thus created. Mr. Stephen Graham, who knows his Russia, hints at the unloveliness of this phase of Russian life, and preaches agriculturalism as the only salvation.

In a country which is for six months of the year, more or less, covered with snow, although in recent times, owing it is believed to the gradual deforestation, the snow fall is declining, agricultural pursuits cannot keep the peasant fully employed all the year round, hence village industries are recommended as the remedy.

For good or for evil, however, factory life has

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become, and is increasingly growing, the feature of modern industrialism all the world over. In Russia to-day there are towns composed entirely of factory hands. They are far more vicious than the mining camps of America, so vividly described by Bret Harte. They are simply sinks of iniquity, where nothing is sacred, and human life is insecure. The racial deterioration that factory life has produced is appalling. This is not a statistical study, nor a pessimistic sociological treatise, it is just an attempt to portray in simple language the conditions of Russian life, and therefore we do not propose to over-paint the gloomy features of this side of her development. We went through a similar phase in England. A study of the conditions of English factory life in the first half of the last century will reveal a state of affairs nearly as hopeless.

The Russian Government were made aware of the trend of things at a comparatively early date. A sensational Russian writer published some thirty years ago a tremendously powerful novel entitled *The Slums of St. Petersburg*, which for downright hopeless and depressing realism left Emile Zola miles behind. But it was not only by literary means that the Government was awakened to the true condition of the working classes. There were other and more convincing evidences. One of the strongest of these was the spread of the revolutionary spirit, the general discontent and insubordination of the workers throughout the length and breadth of the country.



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A feature of the revolutionary propaganda in Russia is that when it was intellectual and philosophical, when it was a foreign importation and consequently exotic, it did not appeal to the people. Taking its rise in the immature brains of university students, it assumed an alien form, never caught hold of the lower classes, and was regarded by them with distrust and enmity. As a young man in Moscow I remember the casual labourers in the big market adjoining the university turning out and mobbing a students' demonstration to such effect that a riot was only prevented by the calling out of the troops. As a matter of fact, the Nihilists with their visionary theories never succeeded in getting any hold of the people.

Among the factory hands, however, surreptitious seditious literature spread much more rapidly, and the political police, as industrialism developed, caused the Government much uneasiness by their disquieting reports. In order to ascertain the extent to which revolutionary ideas had taken root with the working classes, trades unions were encouraged, and *agents provocateurs* employed to, as it were, segregate the disaffected. This very dangerous experiment, which in addition to its extreme immorality must be likened to a sort of political playing with fire, had the most disconcerting results. The police had conjured up the devil, but they did not know how to lay him. The strikes and riots which were directly traceable to this unfortunate Machiavellian cunning

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of the secret police acted like a match to a train of gunpowder.

Russian statesmen recognised that something had to be done. Mere repression was not enough. It was felt that the conditions must be changed, that the lives of the working classes must be made brighter and healthier, that the demoralisation had gone too far for mere palliative measures, that radical root and branch reforms were called for. What did the paternal Russian Government do? It passed laws for the regulation of the working hours, and the housing and hygiene generally of the factory hands; and then in order to see that these new regulations were properly observed by the factory owners, it appointed to each factory a resident official inspector, whose duty it was to watch over the workpeople, to act as an intermediary between them and the management, to see that they had no grievances, and to nip in the bud any signs of political disaffection. These official guardian angels have in a great number of cases taken their duties very seriously, and have really been of great benefit and service to the workers; in other cases, however, their attitude has been of the usual official and perfunctory kind, for their sympathies have too often been entirely on the side of the management, and but little on that of the men. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the condition of the factory hands has of recent years improved immensely, and is still improving.

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For all that, the great problem which the State and society have to face in Russia, as much as in other countries, is the problem of the working classes. There is, moreover, one feature of this problem which is calculated to make it more difficult of solution than it is in other and older countries.

Throughout Western Europe the growth of society, as at present constituted, may be said to be the result of centuries of evolution. Hence there are no hard and fast lines of demarcation between its various layers. The industrial development has proceeded slowly and normally, in response to natural requirements, adapting itself from time to time to altered conditions brought about by a variety of factors, such as the new inventions, the discoveries of science, the democratisation of capital, and so on. These have all been of slow growth. If we study the structure of society in the Middle Ages and compare it with that of to-day, we shall be startled by the extraordinary changes that have taken place, but when we begin to study those changes and endeavour to ascertain how and by what means they have been brought about, we shall at once be struck by the slowness of the growth, and the difficulty of setting up landmarks of progress. The growth of modern society has been slow, it has been natural, for it has been unconscious. We have all been trying to do something for the benefit either of ourselves or of the community, and the cumulative effect of all these endeavours is what we see to-day.

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In Russia evolution has been artificial. It has not proceeded naturally from within like a spontaneous growth, but it has been stimulated from without, and hence the results have partaken largely of the nature of hot-house fruit.

Peter the Great converted Russia into a European state by a wave of the magician's wand, or shall we not more truthfully say ~~by crack of the whip?~~ Catherine the Great ~~imported culture~~, Alexander II. conferred freedom, his grandson representative institutions. In 1861 the structure of Russian society was essentially mediaeval; fifty-five years later it has become absolutely modern. So rapid a transformation could not have been effected by natural growth, it has been stimulated by the hot-house air of a benevolent despotism.

That so great a change should have been possible without serious bloodshed, without revolution, without a general unsettlement of the minds of the people, and without loss of their national characteristics, is very reassuring, and argues well for the future. One disadvantage was, however, inseparable from so sudden a change. Where there is no gradual transition there must of necessity be great dislocation, a great social unsettlement, and this is what has occurred.

Let us take the example of the French, the English, the German people. The working classes there have an inducement to thrift, because an increase of their prosperity, which may take them up a rung of the



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social ladder, has no disturbing effect on their imagination, does not present any of the features of a fairy tale, there is no magician's wand about it. They have cousins, relations of their wives, acquaintances, who are better off than themselves, there is consequently ever present the spur of emulation, which urges on those who possess any ambition to improve their condition. This state of affairs pervades all classes, and thus people rise by imperceptible means, by stepping along the closely-placed rungs of the ladder to advancement and prosperity. The middle classes act as steps between the rich and the poor, a means, perhaps, as much of descent as of ascent.

But in Russia there were no middle classes until the other day, and there existed two totally dissimilar worlds, which had nothing in common with each other—the world of the worker, and that of the gentleman. The worker had but little inducement to advancement, seeing that he could not rise, that he must perpetually remain a member of the class from which he sprung.

It is by the formation of intermediary layers in the social state that the Russian working classes will be saved. Fortunately these intermediary layers are already beginning to take a sort of indefinite shape. The spirit is moving on the waters. By the removal of the greatest temptation to which the Russian working-man is exposed, the temptation of drink, further inducements to progress are offered.

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The careful reader of the foregoing pages may summarise as follows: Socialism in various forms as a panacea and a means of assuring the well-being of the Russian masses has been tried, found wanting, and is in course of being abolished, seeing that it has been found to be incompatible with liberty.

There is no exaggeration in this. The reformers of sixty years ago were all socialists at heart at a time when socialism was the fashion, and individual initiative was universally distrusted. It is curious to reflect that it was left to men like John Stuart Mill, who was avowedly unorthodox, and had no religious beliefs, to express a faith in liberty and the free evolution of society, whilst the fanatics of both camps, the progressives and the reactionaries alike, whether believers in Providence or not, were at least united in their determination to leave nothing to chance. The most devout of professed Christians betrayed a profound though probably unconscious lack of faith in the Almighty and His governance of the universe, seeing that they dreaded the consequences of allowing the individual to do as he liked.

But to return to the Russian workman. To the practical person, his moral, social and political condition are after all of very little interest, the important question is what manner of craftsman he may be, in other words, has he natural ability, is he tractable, sensitive to new ideas, is he a good workman or a bad one?

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On this point opinions differ. There are people who maintain that the Russian workman is a slothful sot, ignorant, obstinate, unteachable, unmanageable, hopelessly stupid, a savage and a drunkard. What has been said here about his evolution will incline most readers to think that it would indeed be a miracle if this opinion were not in accordance with fact. But those who know Russia best, those employers of labour who have really taken the trouble to study their workmen, are, strange to say, of a very different mind. They will, on the contrary, maintain that the Russian workman has parts and inborn intelligence, that he is quick to learn, adaptable and shrewd, and that if properly handled he will not merely work well, but will work harder than the workman of any other country.

There must obviously be exaggeration somewhere, and the truth will be found to lie, as usual, about half-way between the two extremes.

That the Russian working classes are addicted to drink is not surprising, seeing that they have as yet but few other pastimes. That they are lazy is also natural. In the first place laziness is a very human weakness, and secondly it is well known that people will not work as well in captivity as they do in a state of freedom; now, as we have seen, fifty-five years ago the Russian working classes were serfs. There is yet the additional factor of climate, the long winter months are very conducive to idleness.

The above are the external conditions. We now

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come to the personal factor. Here we meet with surprises. Every visitor to Russia is struck with the natural aptitude of the Russian lower classes. They are totally different from their German neighbours. On crossing the frontier the contrast between the two races is particularly striking. Behind us, in Germany, we have left a surly, dogged, hard-featured, unresponsive crowd of workers, uncouth and in-artistic in appearance and mode of living. In Russia we see animated countenances, picturesque if poverty-stricken people, and we seem to breathe an atmosphere of amiability, charity and mutual goodwill.

The visitor to Russia is astonished to discover how handy the Russian workman is, what wonders he can perform with his axe, how little he is dependent on appliances and tools. When we turn to the skilled trades we are confronted with the same phenomenon. The workman is intelligent and adaptable, and rapidly masters any trade he is put to. He is shrewd, too, and quick to seize an advantage. An illustration will suffice. When agricultural machinery was first introduced the estate owners found that the peasants regarded it with jealous disfavour, and that it soon got out of repair, and as there were no skilled mechanics available it became useless. The peasants would then club together, buy it for a mere song, ingeniously mend it themselves, and use it for their own land, when it gave excellent results and did not get out of repair again. This



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little incident is eloquent, and speaks volumes for the natural ability of the peasant.

Generally speaking, the Russian workman is a capital craftsman, and in the last fifty years he has made extraordinary progress. Under British management, more especially, he seems to develop his best qualities, as the flourishing condition of Hughesovka and Serpukhov will testify. The English seem to understand the Russians better than any other nation, and the Russians like English employers, work well for them, and are tractable under them. The Germans, on the other hand, seem to bring out the worst features of the Russian character; they are hard and unsympathetic task-masters, and are hated. Somehow the Russian and the German characters will not mix, they are antagonistic, and like oil and water. The German is pedantic, phlegmatic, and works doggedly without enthusiasm or imagination, whilst the Russian is full of temperament, his mind is all colour, he must have sympathy, and his interest must be awakened. A key-note to the Russian character is to be found in the word for beauty. In the Russian language a beautiful girl is described as a red girl, everything beautiful is red, and even beautiful work is called "pricrasnaya rabota," superlatively red work.

All the Russian working classes require, to become the formidable rivals of the rest of Europe, is education and liberty, and this they are getting. The strides which education is making are surprising, and every

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time I visit Russia I am struck by the progress made since the last visit. Two generations ago the bulk of the population was illiterate, to-day illiteracy is comparatively rare. Every village has its school, and universal military service is an additional and very important educational factor.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ARMY

EVERY nation worth its salt is proud of its army, and to this rule Russia is no exception. But whilst in nearly every other country pride in the army implies a perhaps greater pride in the generalship the leaders of that army have displayed, in Russia the national pride is more democratic, and is centred mainly on the gallant rank and file. If you talk to an averagely well-educated Russian about the achievements of the generals of his country, you will find that the names of only two are household words, they are divided by a century, and their fame is due as much to their eccentricities as to their military achievements, they are Souvoroff and Skobeleff.

Souvoroff was a contemporary of Catherine the Great, to whose keen judgment he owed his triumph over his jealous rivals, and yet survived her long enough to defeat Napoleon. Most historians recognise his genius, few admit his sanity. During a council of war presided over by the Empress he is reported to have crouched on the floor, flapped his arms as though they were wings, and, hopping round the room, to have crowed like a cock. It was he

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who invented the famous saying: "The bullet's a fool, but the bayonet's a fine fellow." When his troops were practically in open mutiny whilst crossing the Alps, and were for retreating, he saved the situation by causing a grave to be dug and having himself placed in it. "Now," he said, "you may run away, but I shall leave my bones amidst these snows." It is stated that this little bit of acting saved the situation and restored discipline amongst the men.

Skobeleff was, if possible, even more of a mad-cap than Souvoroff, and was the hero of the Russo-Turkish War. His father, also a general, was a great courtier and a man of wealth, who put his son into the guards, and intended him to make what is called a career. The youngster, however, was much too eccentric to conform to conventional rules. His extravagances were such that his father refused to pay his debts and save him from dishonour unless he married a wealthy young lady of his father's choosing. The young scamp reluctantly accepted the terms, but, after the wedding, left his bride at the church door and never set eyes on her again. Thereupon the father got his son transferred to the army of the Caucasus, where the intrepid cavalry officer brilliantly distinguished himself in Central Asian campaigns. At the outbreak of the war with Turkey the gallant young Skobeleff, decorated with the St. George's Cross for valour, and already a general, was sneered at by the young



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dandies of the headquarters staff as the victor over the dressing-gowns. Very soon, however, he established a reputation which has become almost a legend, like that of Napoleon, and was rapidly promoted, until in his reckless assaults on Plevna he wasted so many lives that he was discredited with the humane Alexander II., and again lost favour, only to win undying fame by his celebrated crossing of the Shipka Pass. His subsequent conduct during the campaign, the difficulty with which he was restrained from marching into Constantinople, and his many eccentricities, brought him once more into disgrace. After years of obscurity he was given command of an expedition against the Turcomans, who had been a thorn in the flesh of Russia for some time, won the battle of Geok Teppé, took Samarkand and covered himself with glory. His indiscreet speech at a Paris banquet, in which he gave rein to his hatred of Germany, caused him to be recalled and reprimanded, and he shortly afterwards died in Moscow in circumstances which had best be ignored.

Skobeleff and Souvoroff were undoubtedly geniuses, but in the case of both it was their democratic tendencies which endeared them to the people.

In other countries the army has been regarded as the main instrument of the reactionary forces, the school of despotic government, and entirely out of sympathy with the people. This is scarcely the case in Russia, where the army has but too frequently been the revolutionary force, and given expression

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to popular discontent. One of the best proofs of the artificial character of the Nihilist movement is that it never took any real root in the army.

The Russian army as a national institution dates, like everything else in that country, from Peter the Great. His predecessors surrounded themselves with guards who resembled the Turkish janissaries, and frequently became more powerful than their master. Whether they were opritchniki or streltzi (sharpshooters) mattered but little. Peter the Great faced a rebellion of this latter body in his usual strenuous manner. Very few of them were left alive after he had dealt with them "faithfully," and those who remained were disbanded.

Of course, Peter had his own body-guard, his own pet janissaries. These were composed originally of the Preobrajensky Regiment, which commenced as a company of play-fellows whom Peter as a boy formed into a military corps, for whom he obtained foreign instructors, whilst he was living obscurely in the village of that name. This devoted band of playmates grew with Peter in stature and increased in numbers, until they became a formidable force and the nucleus of the Russian guard.

During Peter's reign Russia was at war with Sweden and Turkey, and consequently an army on Western European lines became necessary. Those were the bad days of standing armies, of professional soldiers who fought for their wages and lived by the sword. These soldiers, who made warfare their trade,

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were enlisted, and had but little patriotism or pride of country, they hired themselves out to the best paymaster. This rule applied to officers and men alike, and Peter had no difficulty in attracting to his country a sufficient number of military instructors to train a formidable army. As for the rank and file, that was a far easier problem. The gentry were called upon to contribute in proportion to the size of their estates, or rather the number of their serfs. All the undesirables were thus got rid of, and an army was created, not essentially different from the armies of all other European countries, and consisting to a large extent of the dregs of the population. All the vagabonds, all the undesirables, were drafted into the military forces of the empire, and by means of an iron discipline as harsh as that of the Roman legions, and the introduction of the un-Russian punishment of running the gauntlet, these black-guards were speedily licked into shape. Peter the Great had from the first felt the necessity of having two classes of troops, the one to fight his battles, the other to protect the sovereign, and he consequently designated the first the army and the second the guard. This is the reason why when Russians talk of the army they mean the line.

The guards grew in numbers and flourished exceedingly. Many a palace revolution was effected by them, and both Elizabeth and Catherine the Great owed their throne to the support of these brave fellows. As the cause championed by the guards was

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invariably popular, they were during this period in great favour.

Whilst Peter the Great had formed his army on the Western European model, it cannot be said that he copied any army in particular. In those days France was regarded as the premier nation, not only in the arts and graces, but also in the military sense. Even to-day nearly all our military terms have a French origin, and much as the Germans may be disinclined to own it, their own military expressions are as French as ours. Hence the majority of the instructors were either Frenchmen, or had been trained in the French, then the only, school. But as the eighteenth century passed its meridian, the phenomenal successes of Frederick the Great, who had fought more or less successfully for seven years against what amounted to a coalition of Europe, attracted attention to the Prussian army.

The Grand-Duke Peter, later Peter III., who was heir apparent to the Russian throne, but was to all intents and purposes a German, conceived an inordinate admiration for his kinsman, the King of Prussia, whom he openly exalted above every living monarch, and on his ascent to the throne he proceeded to introduce the Prussian military system. It must not be forgotten that during the reigns of Anne and Elizabeth the Russian soldier, and more especially the guards, had been somewhat pampered. The good-natured Elizabeth, who could never forget her indebtedness to them, and moreover, so it was



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reported, was incapable of refusing them anything, had allowed discipline to grow very slack ; officers used to appear on the drill-ground in their dressing-gowns, and the privates were treated with a consideration and indulgence that used to make the gorge of the little martinet and tyrant Grand-Duke rise with indignation. As Peter III. he determined to put a stop to all such criminal laxity. He abolished the easy-fitting and comfortable Russian uniforms, and introduced the Prussian tight-buttoned coats and gaiters, the ridiculous pig-tails, and more particularly the harsh, inflexible discipline which dated back to the stern old times of Frederick William I., who ruled his country with the stick.

This very unwise procedure of Peter III. cost him his throne and his life. For his lack of human sympathy and his pedantic severity had turned the guards against him, whilst he had failed to secure friends elsewhere. Catherine II., who was placed on the throne by a clique of guardsmen with the handsome Orloff at their head, had as little reason as Elizabeth to treat her guards unkindly. Her son Paul inherited many of the characteristics of his father, and formed round him at his country seat of Gatchina a body of troops called the Young Guard, on which he vented his military zeal. So far from showing any distrust of these rival guards of her son's, Catherine indulgently humoured him in his drill-sergeant proclivities, in which he was aided and abetted by a sycophant, Arakcheyev by name, of

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whose fiendish cruelties Russian schoolboys still read with horror. This inhuman monster so cunningly concealed his real character, and so artfully flattered the humane but weak Alexander, the son of Paul, that he succeeded in after years in acquiring his complete confidence, and perpetrated many abominations under the cloak of loyalty, zeal and religion. Perhaps it was largely due to this man's insensate methods that the army grew disaffected, until on the accession of Nicholas I. a mutiny broke out among the guards which threatened to upset the throne, and had for its object the introduction of republican government. Nicholas I. rose to the occasion, and with conspicuous courage and an iron hand succeeded in quelling the rebellion. He perpetrated the iron military rule of his father and brother, and was moreover a great admirer of the Prussian army. During his reign the army became a splendid machine, and it was generally recognised that the Russian troops were at that time the finest in the world.

The times of Nicholas have passed into a proverb, and a soldier of Nicholas was regarded as the highest expression of military training and devotion. The discipline was iron and the obedience of the soldier unreasoning. A story is told of the Emperor Nicholas and the King of Prussia disputing as to which was the best soldier, the Russian or the Prussian. It was decided to settle the dispute by a practical test. Nicholas sent for one of his

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grenadiers and ordered him to jump out of window, which the soldier immediately did, fortunately without sustaining any injury. Thereupon the King of Prussia sent for one of his guardsmen and ordered him also to jump out of window. The Prussian soldier, however, instead of obeying the order instantly, asked the king what the object of such a feat might be. The King of Prussia was delighted, and claimed that his soldier, although equally ready to obey, had displayed an intelligence which the Russian had not betrayed.

There is another story of a Russian sentry whom the King of Prussia discovered marching up and down in front of a plot of grass in the gardens of one of the imperial country palaces. He asked Nicholas what the sentry was guarding, and the Emperor of Russia was quite unable to explain the reason for the sentry's presence. The matter was inquired into, and laborious research at last discovered the following fact. One day Catherine the Great was walking in this garden in the early summer and espied a solitary daisy growing in the grass. She was so enchanted with its appearance, and so anxious that it should not be wantonly picked, that she placed a sentry there to guard it. This order had never been rescinded, and so there was still a sentry at the spot.

These stories are told to illustrate the rigid and soulless routine of the Russian army in those days. The Crimean War brought its disillusionment with it, and the army, like everything else, had to be

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reformed. With the emancipation of the serfs corporal punishment was abolished, and some ten years later, after the object lesson of the war of 1870-72, universal military service was introduced. At the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War many Russian officers had serious misgivings regarding the efficiency of the new troops, and it was felt that these would be found to be less trustworthy than the old professional soldiers. The result proved these fears to have been groundless. The splendid valour and discipline of the Russian had not been impaired by short service and more humane treatment, but the intelligence of the rank and file and the efficiency of the higher grades had on the other hand been greatly increased.

Under Paul, Alexander I. and Nicholas I. the Russian army had copied that of Prussia. While the colour of the infantry uniform had remained green, the head-dress and the general cut had closely resembled the Prussian uniform. Alexander II. changed all this. He abolished the heavy casque or helmet, and substituted for it the light and serviceable French *képi*. He also did away with the heavy stock and high collar, and gave his troops a much more comfortable and rational dress. It was also under Alexander II. that the characteristic Russian boots were allowed to be worn in marching order. On parade, however, the soldier still wore trousers reaching to the heel. With the accession of Alexander III. this was changed. Alexander III.



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was a national emperor, and was all for Russian institutions, hating foreign ways. He devised a Russian uniform, consisting of a low-crowned fur cap, a tunic without a waist, but secured by a belt, broad knickerbockers, called charivari, and top-boots. He made his officers wear Cossack swords, slung over the shoulder, and having the appearance of scimitars, and he abolished all fancy uniforms. Before his time the cavalry division consisted of four regiments, one of hussars, one of lancers, one of dragoons and one of cuirassiers, but Alexander III. turned all his cavalry into mounted infantry and called them dragoons. Of course, the purely Russian Cossack uniforms were unaltered, and the Cossacks retained their time-honoured organisation.

This homely innovation, which has given the army a most neat and workmanlike dress, has come to stay, and to-day the army is typically Russian, not only in its dress, but in spirit and administration. The Russian officers call their men "children," and though the discipline is anything but lax, the terms on which they are with them are affectionate rather than stern, and there is a familiarity of intercourse which, in this instance at least, does not breed contempt.

To General Skobelev is due the great change in the attitude of the officers to their men. He taught the importance of caring for the comfort and welfare of the private soldier, and the necessity of treating him as a human being and keeping up his spirits, and

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cheering him on the march and in battle. Whilst the Prussian officer is credibly reported to flog his men into action, a stick in one hand and a revolver in the other, and terrorises them on all occasions, never addressing them otherwise than in tones calculated to inspire fear, the Russian officer is amiable, colloquial and humorous. He tries to inspire his men by his example, they form part of his family, and look to him as their friend and counsellor. There is thus a spirit of mutual trust and affection in the Russian army which is most pleasant to see. The officers, of course, are human, they occasionally lose their temper, they can be very severe, but all this is on the family plane. It is as though a father was rebuking his children. The men understand their officers, and the officers understand and, there is no exaggeration in saying, love their men.

While this spirit of mutual affection is essentially Russian, and a trait in the national character, for the Russian is a most lovable person in whatever sphere of life he may be, its development into a system in the army is, as has been said, largely due to Skobelev, who actually ruined himself to provide comforts for his troops.

Skobelev created a school, and when he died there were many of his disciples left to take up his mantle. Among these may be mentioned the somewhat mystical Dragomiroff, who developed theories of his own, and was a believer, even in the days of

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magazine rifles and maxim guns, in the bayonet. He endeavoured to adapt to modern times the teachings of Souvoroff, and will always stand out as a typically national general, whose great ideas did much to reform the army. Another disciple of Skobelev's, and a man whom he had trained, was Kouropatkin, the general who commanded in the Japanese War. Future historians will no doubt do justice to this general's great achievements. This is not the place, nor is the present the time to dwell upon that war. But whatever opinions may be held it must be admitted that the handling of the Trans-Siberian Railway surpassed even the most optimistic expectations.

The Russian officer has always been a brave and gallant gentleman, splendid in action, chivalrous to his enemies, and genial to his men. Unfortunately his geniality has been a little too pronounced. A jolly companion, the prince of good fellows, the Russian has in the past not always taken his profession as seriously as could be wished. In this respect he was not singular. It is not so many centuries ago that our own officers took their duties rather lightly, and regarded the military profession as a career of pleasure. There was a time when officers were looked upon by the straight-laced and sober-minded as sons of perdition. That time is passed. Nobody takes his profession more seriously to-day than the British officer, and it may be confidently asserted that a similar change has in

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recent years come over the Russian officer as well. The splendid achievements of the Russian army in the present war prove more eloquently than any words of mine can do that it is composed of heroes.



## CHAPTER VIII

### TOWN LIFE

PEOPLE who write and talk about Russia have got into the habit of dwelling upon what they call "the strain of plaintive melancholy" which underlies all Russian literature and art, and is the key-note of Russian life. This notion is based upon an absolute misconception of the Russian character. Some centuries ago the French chronicler, Froissart, wrote that the English took their pleasures sadly, and ever since it has been the fashion to assume that we English were all of us melancholy dogs. Of course, the reverse is true. As a matter of fact, we are constitutionally just as joyous, in our own fashion, as the French for instance. In the same way it must be maintained that the Russian nation is happy and cheerful in disposition, and no more gloomy than any other, certainly much less addicted to melancholy than the Germans. The peasants love bright colours, more especially red, and are always singing when in groups.

Town life is certainly the reverse of melancholy. The Russians love the open air, in winter as well as in summer, and on popular holidays there is always

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a "goullianye" somewhere, which means literally a promenade and jollification. These "goullianyes" must be witnessed to be understood. In the majority of cases they have for the background a sort of fair—booths run up temporarily, in which there are performances, principally theatrical. Then there are toboggan slides, swings, bands and similar attractions. These booths and places of popular entertainment are generally erected along the side of a thoroughfare. In front of the booths the common people throng in their multitudes, singing songs and cracking jokes, but without rowdyism. In the thoroughfare, especially in the afternoon, the wealthier classes drive up and down, the womenkind more particularly in all their best finery.

At Christmas, during the carnival week, called the butter-week, and in Easter-week, there is a "goullianye" of this kind in every Russian town. During the summer evenings the principal towns present a most animated and cheerful picture. In the outskirts there is always much open-air dancing on these summer evenings, and generally wherever a number of Russians are gathered together there is an infectious atmosphere of genial gaiety which everybody seems to breathe and inhale. On holidays the Russian people are or, more properly speaking, were, addicted to drink, and used to get extraordinarily "full," but this intoxication very rarely took an offensive form. Drunken brawls, in my time at least, were of the rarest occurrence. The Latin poet

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wisely said that a man's character is to be judged by his eyes, his jokes, and his cups. It is when a man is in his cups that his true nature comes out, and in Russia vodka only brings out into more conspicuous evidence the inherent amiability of the national character. All the Russians are brothers, and the worst they do when they get drunk is to embrace and kiss each other. A more objectionable habit is the constant playing of the accordion.

Russia, before the institution of the Duma, which has served to centralise town life, formerly possessed many capitals, the principal of which were: St. Petersburg, the seat of government; Moscow, the former capital, and still the centre of Russian life and trade; Kieff, the cradle of the Russian Empire, a town of churches, monasteries and relics; and Odessa, the port of the Black Sea, the city of palaces, the home of the Greek merchant princes who formerly at least controlled the grain trade. Of course, every province, or "government," has its chief city, where are reproduced the principal features of the capital, of these there are a great number of varying importance. Saratoff, for instance, is a much finer city than say Riasan, Kharkoff a busier place than Voronej.

St. Petersburg, now Petrograd, the most recent of Russia's three capitals, was built on a swamp by Peter the Great, who desired, as he termed it, to have a window from which Russia could look out into Europe. Unfortunately this window, like all

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the windows in that country, is closed during winter. To give the town a non-Russian character Peter called it after his patron saint, but gave it a German name. This had to be changed when the war with Germany broke out, and so it is now called Petrograd, "grad" being the old Russian name for town, and having a signification very similar to the English "chester," meaning a strong or defended place.

Being built on European lines, St. Petersburg received very few of the characteristics of a typical Russian defensive city. It had no kremlin. The word "kremlin" is derived from "krenel, a flint," and means a fort, it consists of a strong wall, with protected gates and towers.

Petrograd, like the majority of towns created by one directing spirit, is built in lines, or avenues, the central avenue being the famous Nevsky Prospect, which leads from the Neva to eternity, represented by the monastery of St. Alexander Nevsky, several miles out of town. The next principal street is at right angles with the Nevsky, and is called the Morskaya, or maritime street; it is as short as the other is long, but contains many fine shops and buildings. Petrograd is intercepted by a number of canals which drain the swamps on which it is built. The Kazansky Cathedral is the finest church in the Nevsky Prospect, in the centre of which endless avenue of shops and palaces there is the Gostinny Dvor, or Strangers' Court, a sort of bazaar, a veritable colony of shops. In addition to this town



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on the mainland with its fine straight streets, of which there are very many, there are the islands, the Vassily Ostrov and the Stone or Kamenny Ostrov, where there are many new fine residential quarters, and beyond these there are the other islands, where are *café chantants* and restaurants, and where the gilded youth of Russia spend their long evenings, or rather nights, and listen to the singing of the gipsies.

Owing to its foggy climate Petrograd is not a cheerful place. In spite of its fine streets it has an air of heaviness, and produces a feeling of depression on the visitor. The fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, which frowns gloomily over the Neva, seems to impart its severity to the whole town, and yet life is gay and bright. There is a park near the palace, theatres handsomely built by the State, restaurants, and everything that is supposed to impart brightness and gaiety.

Petrograd is the home of the official classes and the Court. Here are the big government departments, the barracks of the various regiments of guards, the palaces of the great nobles, like the Stroganoffs and the Youssoupoffs, the Duma, the University, the Academies of Science and of Arts, the Museums, the famous Hermitage, a sort of annex of the Imperial Winter Palace, with its beautiful pictures and objects of art collected chiefly by Catherine the Great, and here are the palaces of the Grand-Dukes. Petrograd has a large foreign colony, composed

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principally of Germans and English, for the old English factory belonging to the Russia Company is here, and the outskirts are full of factories.

Being the centre of official life, Petrograd is inhabited largely by officials and guardsmen, and it has a large male population, more men than women, in fact. Consequently it partakes of the nature of a camp, life is very brilliant, very dissipated, but the family features are not predominant.

Everybody seems to be in the streets, there is a constant stream of officers and elegantly-dressed people in the Nevsky all day long. In the morning everybody goes shopping, or hurries from one place of business to another. In the afternoon everybody turns out, those who have carriages or sledges (in the winter) drive along the Nevsky and Morskaya to take the air and to exchange greetings with their friends, whilst the foot pavement is crowded with interested pedestrians, who are constantly stopping and chatting as they meet somebody they know. The horses are splendid, and are driven at a rate which is quite alarming. To-day there are also many fine motor cars to be seen. The Emperor and Empress and the Grand-Dukes, and all the distinguished people in residence generally take the air in the afternoon, and the scene is one not merely of animation, but of splendour. Generally dinner is earlier than in England, and after dinner come the theatres.

Although evening dress is not worn quite so

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generally as in London, the brilliant uniforms always impart a festive air to the theatres, and the opera on gala nights is a sight to see. After the theatre there is supper at one of the innumerable *café chantants*, and people seldom get to bed before three. In the home card-parties are frequent, Russians having a perfect mania for cards, but the usual evening reception does not entail much expense. Tea is the usual beverage, and conversation, mostly brilliant, the principal entertainment.

Russians are famous for their hospitality, and many of the wealthy merchants keep open house on Sundays and holidays. All day long the table in the dining-room is laid, and the samovar, or tea-urn, is kept boiling, supplemented by liqueurs and *hors d'œuvre* (*zakousska*) on the sideboard, only to be interrupted by the regular meals, to which everybody who happens to be calling is as a matter of course invited. Russians are also very fond of dancing, and often improvise dances at their houses; regular balls are, of course, also given.

The well-to-do Russian's house lends itself particularly well to entertainment. Most people live in flats, but even among the very wealthy, who inhabit an entire house by themselves, the reception rooms are all on one floor, and are generally arranged in the following order: There is first the salon, or reception room; this is usually a large piece with parquet floor, many chairs, but little furniture of the comfortable order. Here dances are given, and

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people are kept waiting, having previously left their overcoats and overshoes in the vestibule. The salon is frequently also the dining-room, it is followed by a series of drawing-rooms, the most intimate of which being the last. Here the hostess receives the welcome guests. The intermediate rooms are frequently set out with card tables. Everybody smokes cigarettes all day long and everywhere. There is no formality, no stiffness, no awkward restraint. Everybody says whatever comes into his head, conversation is frequently frank, no subject is barred, no person sacred, with the exception always of the Emperor, who is referred to as *Gosoudar*, the sovereign, and of whom it is considered bad form to speak otherwise than respectfully. I have been very much struck by this, even when with people whose political opinions were distinctly unorthodox.

I have found that the person of the Emperor was never the subject of ribaldry. Everything under the sun could be and was laughed at, but the Emperor was not discussed. It is a sure sign of ill-breeding to talk disrespectfully of the Emperor.

From the above brief sketch it will be seen that Russian society is particularly delightful. The majority of Russians are well read, they all have ideas, and as there is but little scope for the expression of their ideas in the press or on the platform, these are aired in the drawing-room, and generally with a freedom which will surprise the stranger. The Russian loves conversation, and Russians will sit



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for hours smoking cigarettes and drinking tea and talking. I have known ladies to take a leading part in such conversations, which are always interesting, and often instructive and witty.

A great feature of Russian town life is the clubs. In England everybody belongs to a club, in Russia every town of any importance has at least two clubs, the Nobles' Club and the Merchants' Club. These clubs are the centres of the social life of the two classes of civic society. The balls, concerts, lectures and similar "functions" are all held at one or other of these clubs, which on ordinary days are much given to card playing.

While Petrograd is the capital and centre of Russian official life, the heart of Russia may be said to pulsate in Moscow. This was certainly the case before the days of the Duma. At present the Duma attracts to the capital the best intellect of the country, but Moscow is still the home, as it always has been, of the old aristocracy. Here they have their delightful straggling houses, all on one floor, with separate wings for the kitchen and the servants. Even in Moscow, however, the heavy hand of modern improvement has made itself felt, and while her streets are as badly paved with cobble stones as ever, pretentious flats are springing up on every side. There are arcades, Messrs. Muir and Merrilies have started a sort of stores, like Whiteley's or Harrod's, there are electric trams and monster hotels.

Moscow is a typical Russian town, and is

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consequently worthy of description. It differs from Petrograd more particularly by its plan. Moscow is a circular town. The centre is the Kremlin, which stands on a hill and contains the Imperial Palace, and the old churches. Outside the Kremlin walls is the Gostinny Dvor, or Guests' Court, which consists of rows of bazaars. Between these and the Kremlin is a wide space where the public meetings used to be held, and where in olden times the tyrant Tzars used to execute their subjects, here is the dazzling church of Basil the Blessed. Round the Kremlin wall is the old ditch, which has been converted into a public park. The next circle is described by the boulevards. These are promenades planted with trees, where the citizens take the air in the afternoon and evening and meet their friends. At some distance from these runs the Sadovaya, or Garden Street, which forms an outer circle. Moscow has been described as a city of churches and ponds, and if we look down upon the town from the neighbouring Sparrow Hills, from which Napoleon first saw it, we shall be dazzled by the reflection of the sun from its numerous ponds and lakes and the gilt cupolas of its many Byzantine churches.

Nearly all the provincial towns of Russia are more or less replicas of Moscow. They may be briefly described as consisting of a kremlin, a centre, a main street, or sector, the diameter of the circle, and of a number of circular streets bisected at various points.

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Every Russian town of any importance has, moreover, in addition to these features, a number of fine public buildings, built on a classical plan specially designed by the Emperor Alexander I. himself, and repeated faithfully on a suitable scale. These buildings include a State theatre. The Russian State theatre is a Greek temple to the muses, it is comfortable and spacious, and it has a foyer. The foyer is the principal feature of every Russian theatre, and here the entire audience promenades up and down between the acts, and exchanges salutations and greetings. A theatre without a foyer in which people could meet each other would not appeal to the sociable Russian character. The local dignitaries benevolently take part in this regular parade, and receive with becoming graciousness the salutations of their equals, and the more distant and respectful greetings of their inferiors. On these occasions what is striking to the foreign observer is the total absence of snobbishness, everybody maintains his self-respect, there is no attempt to take social advantage of the accessibility of the great ones of the earth, who on their part exhibit no haughtiness or desire to snub the less distinguished members of the provincial microcosm. There is an easy, simple, unaffected politeness which is mutual and smooths the path of life.

An interesting feature of town life is the villegiatura, the summer exodus into rural suburbs. Russia is a land of extremes, of extreme cold in the winter

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and great heat in the summer, and during the heat of summer everybody, who possibly can, takes a "datchia." A datchia is a villa, it is preferably situated in a forest, it is built of wood, is usually the property of the peasants of some neighbouring village, but it is always surrounded by verandahs on which the family takes its meals. During the day the males who inhabit the datchias are attending to their business in town, the ladies spend the afternoons taking a siesta. It is not until the evening that datchia life begins to throb. There is usually a band and an open-air ball, and here the young men and maidens dance and flirt in the cool, delightfully aromatic, pine forests in which Russia abounds. The life of the datchia is one of promiscuity and geniality, there is no formality, no ceremony, no stupid introductions, no foolishness about dress. Young ladies masquerade as peasant girls, wear the picturesque national costume, and go about without the fearful and wonderful headgear which makes the woman of Western Europe so unapproachable, and causes so much domestic unhappiness.



## CHAPTER IX

### SIBERIA

THERE is a dread sound about the word Siberia. To the man in the street that word conjures up untold hardships and cruelties, quicksilver mines, the knout, the flogging to death of unfortunate victims, and similar horrors. In 1882 the late Rev. Henry Lansdell published a very interesting and copiously illustrated work in two volumes entitled *Through Siberia*, in which many of these popular errors were dispelled.

Siberia was originally an unknown country. In a pamphlet prepared by the Russian Government for the information of peasant emigrants, the following popular account of the early history of Siberia is given :—

“Five hundred years ago few people in Russia knew anything about Siberia. They knew that beyond the Ural Mountains there was a strange land inhabited by peculiar people, who had a language of their own, and possessed great wealth of gold and expensive skins of wild animals. Gradually the Russians began to pick up some knowledge about Siberia. The first to find their way across the Urals were Novgorod merchants, who began by trading with the natives and later fought them. . . . The

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natives, however, protected their possessions and defended themselves as best they could. The Tartars treated the natives badly, and invaded their country in hordes, driving the natives away into colder climes and seizing the best territory. During this period a large portion of the population was killed and Siberia became Tartar. . . . Four hundred years ago the Tartar domination of Russia came to an end, and the Russians gradually drove the Tartars away. They began by refusing to pay them tribute, and later, in the course of a century, they proceeded to take possession of Tartary. Under Ivan the Terrible they conquered the kingdoms of Kazan and Astrakhan. Then came the turn of Siberia also.”

Siberia was really conquered for Russia by a Cossack freebooter and outlaw, Yermak, who had fled from the wrath of the Tzar, and the death to which he had been condemned, into Siberia, which he virtually conquered with his band of robbers. The Tzar, Ivan the Terrible, was so pleased with Yermak's achievement, that he gave him a full pardon and loaded him with honours. Subsequently Yermak was trapped and killed by the Tartars, but the conquest thus singularly begun was speedily followed up, and gradually Russian adventurers subdued the whole territory.

Siberia soon became a sort of Botany Bay. Many Russians emigrated and settled there of their own free will, others were sent there for punishment. A

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hundred years after Yermak's death there were already seventy thousand Russians in the new territory, besides a large number of refugees of whom no record could be kept. In the eighteenth century the land was overrun with refugee serfs, miners, factory hands, and deserters from the army. These people founded a hardy and independent race, and lived in a state resembling the ideal anarchy or lawlessness imagined by Proudhon and, what are to-day called, anarchists. As time went on these colonists grew uneasy lest the long arm of the law should reach them, and they made overtures to China; but the Chinese would have nothing to say to them, and so they finally petitioned the Empress Catherine II. of Russia to take them under her protection, voluntarily offering to pay taxes and contribute to the national revenue. But even after their position had been thus regularised they enjoyed a measure of freedom and independence which was denied to their Russian compatriots at home, who suffered under the yoke of serfdom. Of course there were also large numbers of convicts who were condemned to work in the mines, and others who were sentenced to exile. Catherine II. permitted the landed gentry to exile their undesirable serfs to Siberia; later, in 1805, a number of dissenters were also exiled there.

Mr. Lansdell in the book I have referred to says: "There exists a great deal of misapprehension respecting the number, misery, and degradation of Russian

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political prisoners. The severest case of punishment of a political prisoner I met with was that of, I think, a Nihilist, at Kara, who had daily to go to work in the gold mines; but on returning he had a room to himself, some of his own furniture, fittings and books, one of which was on political economy. His wife lived in the neighbourhood, and could see him lawfully and bring him food at frequent intervals; and it was not difficult for her to see him unlawfully, for just in front of his window passed the public road, where she could stand and talk to him with ease. I met in Siberia one political prisoner whose case was more surprising, perhaps, than any I have mentioned. It was that of a man who had been concerned in one of the attempts on the life of the late Emperor (Alexander II.). He was sentenced to the mines, and no doubt popular imagination pictured him chained and tormented to within an inch of his life, whereas I found him confined indeed, but only to the neighbourhood, and dressed, if I remember rightly, in a tweed suit, looking highly presentable, and engaged in a way that I purposely avoid naming, but which did not necessitate the soiling of his fingers."

In another place Mr. Lansdell says: "The Russians introduce or allow the introduction into their prisons of an ameliorating influence, in the form of local committees, for furthering the temporal welfare of the prisoners. 'You see,' said to me the president of one of these committees, 'we have two elements in the government of our prisoners.



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The police strive for the letter of the law, whilst we strive for kindness to the prisoner.' Thus justice and mercy go hand in hand, and when they happen to fall out, I fancy that in Siberia, after their easy-going fashion, mercy not unfrequently wins the day."

While Mr. Lansdell was an optimist, Mr. George Kennan, an American engineer, who published, ten years later, his famous book on *Siberia and the Exile System*, was a pessimist. Mr. Harry de Windt, on the other hand, who wrote a counterblast to Mr. Kennan, has been accused of being too obviously an apologist. The truth probably lies somewhere between these extremes, but it is at least fair to assume that prison life in Siberia was not intended to be a rest cure, and that the political prisoners, quite justifiably in my opinion, seeing that they were at war with the Government, painted their experiences as darkly as they could. One of the latter, however, has made an interesting confession. In his book on *Russian and French Prisons*, Prince Krapotkin, who had experience of both, but whose scientific accuracy was not to be influenced by political bias, frankly admits that solitary confinement in a French prison was a far more horrible punishment than incarceration in Russia.

As a geographical expression, Siberia is a term applied to a region embracing a variety of climates. To the north, near the Arctic Ocean, the country is inhospitable, and consists of a sort of frozen bog,

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called tundra, which never thaws, in the short summer the sun only melts the surface. Here life is scarcely possible, and in the old days the escaped criminals who found their way there were deserving of the greatest commiseration. The central region is a fertile plain very similar to Canada, and the south is almost tropical.

To-day exile to Siberia has been abolished. Instead thereof emigration into this Canada of the Russian Empire is actively encouraged by the State, who grants land to settlers and publishes pamphlets to attract the peasant from thickly-populated districts to come and colonise it.

The land is phenomenally fertile, and with good management might be converted into the granary of Europe: the Trans-Siberian Railway has made it accessible to the world, numerous branch lines are being constructed and in contemplation. For all that the settlers are not always satisfied. In this respect also the resemblance to Canada is maintained. Many a colonist who has settled in Siberia abandons the country after finding the work too hard, hence only the men of grit and perseverance remain, and consequently it may be truthfully said that the population of Siberia is composed of the hardiest and most enterprising elements of the Russian stock. The Government recommends settlers to proceed with their own horses, independent of the railway, at the rate of about forty to fifty miles a day, taking all their household goods with them.

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The western provinces or governments of Siberia, Tobolsk and Tomsk, are together larger than the whole of Western Europe, including Germany and Austria-Hungary. This is mainly arable land, and may be described as Siberia Felix. Here the Russian peasant finds conditions very similar to those he is accustomed to in Russia, and here, far removed from official interference and virtually unhampered, he develops sterling qualities and great independence. It will take generations to settle this enormous territory. Nor must it be forgotten that the Russian agriculturist with his primitive methods is still at a disadvantage compared with the Canadian, for instance; nevertheless there is a fine field for agricultural machinery, and the Russian is rapidly discovering its advantages.

The province of Irkutsk very greatly resembles the above western provinces, but in the Altai region we find conditions not favourable to the genius of the Russian peasant. In the gold-mining district of Siberia the Russian shines least.

The Russian peasant has never been, and I venture to think never will be, an ideal miner. American mining engineers have frequently complained to me of the laziness of the Russian miner, and the difficulty of obtaining suitable labour for the Siberian mines. This is due entirely to a misconception of the Russian Government, who do all they can to keep out the Chinese. Russian Government officials in Siberia have repeatedly laid stress, in conversation with me,

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on the danger of what they regard as the Chinese menace. They say the Chinese labour gangs are the most serious competitors of Russian labour, and that, in spite of all the efforts of the Government, they cannot be kept out. A moment's reflection will show that the complaints of the American mining engineers seem to point to the desirability of accepting as a remedy, and welcoming, the support of the despised Chinese ganger, whose invincibility is the despair of the officials. The example of Germany could surely be safely followed in this instance. In Germany the mining work is not performed by Germans, but by Poles, Hungarians, and even Italians, just as the navy work of the United States of America is not performed by American citizens. Siberia is an enormous country, and will for many generations to come absorb all the population Russia can spare to settle its arable land. Why should not the mining operations be performed by nomadic Chinese gangs? This seems to me the only solution of the problem. That Siberia is in need of settlers is proved by the policy Russia has adopted in the present war of offering land in that region to the Slav soldiers of the Austrian army who have been taken prisoners in such large numbers.

To the British public, Siberia will for many years to come be interesting principally on account of its undoubted mineral wealth, its gold-fields and coal-fields, its petroleum and similar deposits, and in order that these may be economically worked, and thus



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contribute to the development and wealth of the Russian Empire, abundant efficient labour is essential. That labour is plentiful, and is insistently demanding admission; but the Government, from a misplaced national sentiment, will not allow this source to be made fully available. In this attitude the Russian Government, I hasten to add, is actuated by the best motives, only I venture to think that it has misjudged the question, and confused the issue, by mixing up national and economical considerations. In this case the national considerations can scarcely be said to come into play in view of the fact that the proper place for the Russian peasant is on the land, and in Siberia there is no question of over-population.

The Trans-Siberian Railway is a link between the Far East and Western Europe, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. The effect it has already produced has scarcely been recognised, but as time goes on its influence will be increasingly felt, and Russia will find it more and more difficult to maintain that international highway pure and undefiled from all alien influences. Already Eastern Siberia abounds in industrious Chinese and Japanese, who everywhere elbow out by their frugality, low wages, and superior industry the easy-going Russians, and it is not by legal measures and Government regulations that the Russian can be protected from the competition of these redoubtable rivals. The problem must be faced and frankly met. Russia can protect her agricultural classes, and can afford to allow the

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Chinese to do the work for which they appear to be especially fitted, for the Chinaman has no desire to become a settler or to expatriate himself.

That the Trans-Siberian Railway is effecting changes which the Russian Government is powerless to prevent is proved by the examples of Kharbin and Vladivostok. Vladivostok literally translated means "Rule thou the East." At present, however, it looks as though the East were about to rule the port in question. In the past Russia permitted the trade of Vladivostok to fall entirely into the hands of German merchants. To-day these German merchants are of course enemies and expelled, and the Japanese, being close at hand, have taken their place. The Japanese have consequently become the most influential people in Vladivostok. The great Japanese firms have shown a remarkable adaptability, and have acquired European business methods with an astonishing rapidity. They are a progressive and enterprising people, and it may be confidently predicted that their influence will be far more beneficial and stimulating than that of the German firms who preceded them, and who, it must be confessed, were more parasitic than constructive.

Vladivostok is thus rapidly becoming a cosmopolitan port, for the Japanese is not the only influence which is making itself felt. The American finds Vladivostok quite a convenient place, and is rapidly entering the mineral zone of Siberia via that accessible open door, which is, however, frost-bound in the winter. But we shall soon see developments which

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will place America in direct communication with Far Eastern Russia all the year round.

If we want to be convinced of the cosmopolitan effect of the Trans-Siberian Railway we need only turn to Kharbin, which the Russians have, with pardonable exaggeration, called the Paris of the Far East. Here Europe and Asia mingle without merging, here there is an opera and there are *café chantants*, here was the commercial centre of the once important soya bean, here fortunes used to be made and lost on 'Change, and here the Chinese are ineradicable.

## CHAPTER X

### THE CAUCASUS

THE Caucasus is a mountain range which separates the Black Sea from the Caspian, and connects Russia with Asia Minor. To the Russian imagination it conjures up romance and adventure. Here Lermontoff was exiled and fought his fatal duel, here the Nobel Brothers laid the foundation of their princely fortune. From here Peter the Great dreamed of conquering Persia; and the Caucasus has been the base from which Russia has conducted her Central Asian campaigns.

For beauty of scenery it is unrivalled, with its snow-clad mountains, its virgin forests, and its lovely lakes; it is the Switzerland of Eastern Europe, only much more luxuriant in foliage. It took Russia the best part of two centuries to conquer and subdue this wonderful region, with its variegated population and remarkable mineral wealth.

From Russia the Caucasus is usually approached via Vladikavkas, "Rule thou the Caucasus," by that remarkable engineering feat the Gruzinskaya Doroga, or Georgian Road, which is one of the most picturesque highways in the world. It was my



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fortune to travel there from Turkey, and I entered this enchanted land from Batoum. The impression left on my mind was that the journey from Trebizond to Batoum was like a rapid transition from barbarism to civilisation. As soon as my steamer entered the harbour of Batoum I espied the stalwart forms of Russian soldiers and sailors keeping order amongst a crowd of Oriental riff-raff. These representatives of autocracy seemed to me, in contrast with the Turks I had left behind me, the pink of smartness. As I got nearer I could see no trace upon their faces of that fierce and cruel fanaticism and that animal stupidity which cloud the countenances of the officials of the Sultan. I was in another world. Here was shipping of every description, locomotives standing on the quay with long trains of goods wagons waiting for merchandise, an atmosphere of business and bustle, and with it that indefinable air of vastness and order which is peculiar to Russia. The police officer who came on board to examine passports was a courteous European gentleman, who wore an expression of calm dignity very different from the low cunning and insolence of the Turks. As I put my foot on land and looked up at the glorious mountains of the Caucasus, I breathed more freely. The very air seemed to be different. I felt instinctively that I was in a great country—young, energetic, and full of hope and promise.

A little less than forty years ago Batoum was a

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small fishing village, pestilent and vile. Its very name meant "the end of everything," it was the *Ultima Thule* of Turkish dominion in the Black Sea. I have had the privilege of knowing the gallant and typically Russian officer who captured Batoum with a regiment of Cossacks in the Russo-Turkish War in 1877. He was severely reprimanded for his foolhardy feat. General Vassiltchikoff is essentially a courteous, chivalrous, cultured Russian officer, exactly like an Englishman in manner, appearance and mode of thought. Batoum is to-day a flourishing town. The shores of the Black Sea are lined by a beautiful and spacious boulevard, somewhat reminiscent of the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, where the notabilities of Batoum, with their wives, sisters and sweethearts, disport themselves in true Russian fashion. The trip from Trebizond had been charming, the magnificent mountains imparting grandeur to the scenery; but here in Batoum, when one was as it were face to face with them, the splendour of these snow-capped mountains exceeded my liveliest anticipations.

The journey from Batoum to Tiflis was a revelation. The road beats the famous Corniche of the Riviera hollow. Through mountain passes, amid deep ravines and by steep precipices, now keeping the waters of the Black Sea in view, now along the valley of a romantic river, with perpendicular and hilly banks, the ruins of the castles of former robber princes frowning down upon us, the railway winds its picturesque course.

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The pace was slow, but then that gave one time to take in the beauties of the scenery. Here and there I came across tea plantations minded by the affable Chinaman in his national dress, who had been imported with the tea by enterprising Russian tea merchants anxious to make the experiment of growing tea on Russian soil. In Odessa, and in fact all over the South of Russia, China tea is, however, being rapidly supplanted by the Ceylon article.

As the train slowly meandered on towards its destination—I must admit that the carriages were luxuriously comfortable — mounted Circassians occasionally came in sight, wearing their curious sheepskin caps and equally curious capes. Horse and rider seemed to form part of the same organism. The men were armed to the teeth, and extremely handsome. All Circassians, or nearly all, are and look like princes. Their sharp, regular features, tall, elegant figures and graceful carriage denote purity of race. They have a walk peculiarly their own, which is inimitable. The men are brave, and the women beautiful.

The capital and “queen” of the Caucasus is the handsome town of Tiflis, which is so full of officers of the higher grades that the people say you cannot spit without hitting a general. Tiflis, surrounded by glorious snow-capped mountains, is so hilly that some of the streets look like toboggan slides, but the principal thoroughfare, in which are situated the chief

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public buildings, is a very fine and spacious street. The roadway is of enormous breadth. The cathedral and theatre, one in purest Byzantine and the other Arabesque, and very quaint to look upon, the palace of the Viceroy, the severely classical Museum, the somewhat tawdry Temple of Fame, wherein are preserved the trophies and mementoes of Russian valour, all these, with numerous handsome shops and broad footways, on which are seen promenading, besides officers in every variety of uniform, Circassians, Armenians, Turks and Europeans, form a gorgeous picture. If the European part of Tiflis is handsome, the Tartar or Oriental town is even more picturesque and interesting. This is the happy hunting ground of the collector of Oriental antiquities. While I was at Tiflis there was staying at my hotel a French gentleman with his wife, who spent the best part of their day revelling among the curios of the Oriental town, and picking up bargains, which they told me would excite the envy of their friends in Paris.

The Museum deserves a word of mention. It was organised and arranged by one of those ubiquitous German men of science who are to be found in every clime. The genial and learned Dr. Radde had worked on the lines of the late Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, of the Natural History Museum in London, and made his museum a veritable object-lesson. The walls were painted to represent the landscapes of the Caucasus, and the specimens of animals were



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placed amidst their native surroundings and flora. I was interested to find bisons and tigers included. The ethnographical section was particularly fascinating.

The journey from Tiflis to Baku is scarcely as interesting from the point of view of scenery as the journey from Batoum to Tiflis. Gradually the country begins to assume that flat and barren aspect which is characteristic of the shores of the Caspian and of the northern plateau of the stony table-land of Asia Minor.

A strange spectacle awaits the traveller on his arrival at Baku. He sees before him an enormous barren sand waste, and beyond it the sea. No town is in sight. Suddenly the train reaches the end of this desert, and the traveller finds himself descending the plateau, and can descry the town of Baku fringing the Caspian. On his approach his nostrils become invaded with that odour of naphtha which will never leave them until Baku is miles away.

It is a strange-looking town. The streets are broad and clean. There is a magnificent quay. Telephones, electric trams, all the newest inventions abound. If the houses were a little taller and a little more ugly, one might almost fancy oneself in an American city out West. There is the same suggestion of newness about everything, the same sanguine atmosphere. Everybody is hopeful. But the quantities of Persians and Tartars in their picturesque costumes, the camels in the market-place the Persian citadel, and the Russian soldiers

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and peasants dispel the illusion. No vegetation of any kind flourishes in Baku, owing to the acidity of the soil and the naphtha in the air; but the town is enterprising, and has laid out a park with earth imported from more fertile regions, the shrubs, trees and flowers being regularly renewed; the footpaths, however, are of asphalt.

Baku is divided into two towns—the white and the black. In the black town are the oil refineries. It is separated by an enormous sandy waste, many miles in extent, from Baku proper, the white town, and is built entirely of wood, so that when it burns, as it often does, no valuable materials are wasted.

Some of the finest oil wells are situated close by at Balakhanni. Here the visitor will be surprised to find enormous lakes of oil. All over the district are quaint pyramidal timber structures looking like gigantic windmills without sails. These are fountains. Occasionally a fountain will be too impetuous for such control, and will burst the bonds of the timber structure. Hence the lakes.

I have seen such fountains spouting forth dense black naphtha a hundred feet high and more. Such fountains, of course, make the fortunes of their lucky owners while they last; but they are very capricious in their behaviour, and will stop as suddenly as they started. While they are spouting the proprietor is the popular hero of the day. He is feted, photographed, pointed out in the street. He is a celebrity, and all because he has been lucky

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enough to strike oil. While he is sitting in his club drinking champagne and playing cards, his fountain is working for him, and vomiting forth from the bowels of the earth a fabulous wealth, which keeps on increasing without any effort of his, and then unexpectedly fails.

Not far from Balakhanni is Sourakhani, the Mecca of the fire-worshippers, with its marvellous temple of eternal fire, to which pilgrimages are still made annually by the disciples of Zoroaster.

To turn from the Caspian Sea to the land frontiers of Russia and Persia, which this war has brought home to the general public, the main road from Trabreez to Russia goes across Julfa, which is the frontier town. Some years ago I rode along this highway, and from Julfa visited Etchmiadzin, the famous capital of Armenia. On this journey I passed Armenian villages, Russian colonies, Mohammedan settlements, all within easy reach of each other, and all living peaceably together under the benevolent but firm rule of the great White Tzar. To say there is no dissatisfaction would be grossly untrue, to say that the various peoples had no just grievances would be equally misleading, for there is no place in this imperfect world where everybody is happy, but that the population are prosperous and progressing is absolutely the fact. I fear, however, that this war has caused much desolation amongst them.

At Etchmiadzin the Armenian monks predominate.

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Here is the cathedral built by inspiration, the design having been revealed to the architect in a dream, and here is one of the most interesting libraries in the world.

On my return journey, as our vessel steamed away from Batoum, and the mountains of the Caucasus receded from us, I could see the snow-capped peaks of that glorious range meeting the deep-blue sky above. Under the snow-capped mountains lay a tier of smaller hills covered with smiling verdure, then came a belt of forests, for the shores of the Caspian are well wooded, and this was fringed by a border of yellow sand terminating in the dark blue of the sea. The colour effect was superb. As we steamed along, stopping at every port, I had opportunities of studying the pleasant patriarchal methods of government which still prevail. The first place of interest, to me at least, which we touched was the monastery of New Athens. This monastery, which is situated picturesquely on a hill overlooking the sea, is partly buried in trees. The next place of interest at which we stopped was Novorossisk. This is the new granary of the Black Sea.

At Novorossisk there is an enormous grain elevator, of which the Russians are inordinately proud. Here the railway systems of Russia meet, and it is a much more convenient port for that reason than Odessa. From Novorossisk we proceeded to Kertch, and then continued our voyage



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along the smiling shores of the soft, luxuriant Crimea, the Riviera of Russia. Here we definitely bade farewell to the grand scenery of the Caucasus, whose retreating shores had kept in sight for an incredibly long time. We stopped at Yalta and passed Livadia, the scene of the last days of the late Emperor Alexander III., and now we got into Balaklava.

As we steamed into Sevastopol Harbour we saw unfolded before us the imposing panorama of the Black Sea Fleet. There was a stoppage of several hours at Sevastopol, and so I went on shore to look at the town ; but there was no time to go to see the country. I am bound to say that in my walk round the town I experienced no annoyance of any kind, and I was surprised to learn later from the papers that a party of English gentlemen had not been allowed to land.

Sevastopol still looked as though it had but recently emerged from a siege. In the new and handsome streets there were countless ruins. Side by side with these crumbling mementoes of the past were the noble promises of the future, really beautiful public buildings, severely classical in style and white and new, pretty parks, broad boulevards. Altogether Sevastopol is a beautiful city ; nevertheless, it looked as though an invading army had passed through it but yesterday.

Lest the people of Russia should be blind to the ruins which still remained standing, and forget the lessons they teach, the Government has erected a

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number of museums, in which the history of Russian prowess and of Russian reverses is treasured for the edification of future generations. Close to these national treasure houses are the forts to protect them, and at the foot of the city, which is built on a hill, in the spacious harbour, were riding at anchor the frowning battleships, which will prevent, it is believed, a repetition of history.

## CHAPTER XI

### CENTRAL ASIA

NOT many years ago there existed a school of politicians—I am not at all certain that it has become extinct—which used to frighten its disciples with the bogey of Russia. It was always preaching, in season and out of season, that the one aim and object of the Russian Empire was the conquest of India, and used to make the flesh of its British audiences creep by stating that they had not many more years left them before the Russian bear would burst through the Himalayas and pounce upon that India which he was supposed to covet so ardently. Now the total area of India is 1,802,000 square miles, that of Russia is 8,770,703 square miles, whilst the area of Russian Central Asia is 1,325,530 square miles. From these figures it follows that according to the school above referred to Russia deliberately conquered Central Asia in order to be able more conveniently to conquer India. In other words, she is supposed to have annexed 1,325,530 square miles of territory with the sole object of being in a position to annex a further 1,802,000 square miles. When the teaching of this school are thus reduced to figures they are at the same time reduced to absurdity.

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A careful investigation of the history of the theory that the sole aim and object of Russian expansion was the ultimate conquest of India will show that it had its origin in the minds of the enemies of the British Empire, and was fostered by them for obvious reasons. The first tangible appearance of the Russian bogey was in the time of Napoleon the Great. Napoleon felt that England was the one fly in the ointment of his grandeur. He wanted to revive the Roman Empire under the mantle of imperial France, but Great Britain stood in his way. He had been defeated in Egypt in his early days, and had never been able to conquer the island empire which was too stupid to know when it was thoroughly beaten. He therefore suggested to Russia the idea of dividing the world between the two empires, the western and the eastern, and held out to Alexander I. the dazzling prospect of the conquest of India. It was mainly because Alexander I. did not fall into the trap thus ingeniously laid for him, nor waste the forces of his country in a futile endeavour to march his armies over the Himalayas, that the complications which led to the campaign of 1812 arose, and it was on this theoretical rock that the empire of Napoleon was wrecked. The Indian scare was revived in later years, first by Napoleon III. and later by his disciple and opponent, Bismarck. We must not forget that Bismarck sat at the feet of Napoleon III. and imbibed his ideas before he overthrew him.



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In order to give an air of probability to this idea that Russia desired above all things the conquest of India, it was necessary to invent a myth which should give it some semblance of probability. That myth was the famous will of Peter the Great, according to which the founder of the Russian Empire was supposed to have left as a legacy to his descendants this task of Indian conquest. It is not within the scope of this brief sketch to examine critically so extraordinary a myth, but a little common sense will enable us to disperse the grim forebodings which this myth has caused. Who has been the most insistent promoter of this idea of Russian aggrandisement, who has most assiduously fostered the belief in the sinister designs of Russia? To that question the student of modern politics is compelled to give but one answer, it was Germany. Why should Germany, who always pretended that the friendship of Russia was more precious to her than any other diplomatic consideration, be so anxious to foment discord between that country and England, and why should Germany, that honest broker, have at the Berlin Congress after the Russo-Turkish War so openly sided with England? Because Germany had greater and more cogent reasons for fearing Russia than any other country, and because she wanted to create a sort of lightning conductor in England which would deflect from her own borders the electricity which she knew was gathering within the frontiers of her neighbour.

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One glance at the growth of Russia will explain my meaning, the present war will illuminate it.

Some people have described Russia as an Asiatic power, and such to a large extent she was when she was called Muscovy and was a comparatively small and land-locked state. Peter the Great decided to make this obscure semi-Asiatic country a European Empire, and he succeeded, but not by expanding eastwards, rather by defeating his western and south-western neighbours. It was at the expense of Sweden and Turkey that Russia became a European power. Russia owed her rise and inception to the Byzantine Empire; it was at the feet of Byzantium that she had been taught Christianity. What more natural than that she should regard her historical mission to be the re-establishment of Byzantine Christianity, the recapture of Constantinople from the Turks, and the emancipation from the yoke of the infidel her racial brethren who had for so long been oppressed by Ottoman rule? Out of this very natural desire there speedily developed a mystical semi-religious and semi-political system of politics which has been called the Slavonic idea. That Slavonic idea has been much more dangerous in theory to the central European powers than it could ever become to England. On the contrary, the liberal section of British thought has always been in strong sympathy with the emancipation of the Balkan Christians from Turkish rule. It was in helping to create a modern Greece that Lord Byron spent the

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last days of his life, and the Bulgarians know that they had in Gladstone their warmest friend.

But Austria and Germany could not view with satisfaction the growth of the Russian Empire. Their object was to endeavour to create interests for Russia in the East calculated to keep that country and England at daggers drawn for many years to come. The way England and Russia were hounded against each other and taught to regard each other as enemies was most skilful.\* But even Germany was unable to keep out the tide or arrest the centrifugal force of her eastern neighbour. With the collapse of Turkey after the Balkan War the disintegration of Austria seemed inevitable, and that would have meant the isolation of Germany. In

\* I may here be permitted to record a small personal experience of my own. Some twenty-five years ago, when I was a working journalist in London, a Belgian diplomatist, who was a personal friend, told me that he had just heard from an absolutely trustworthy source that the Emperor Alexander III. was about to proceed to Samarcand and have himself proclaimed Emperor of Central Asia. I had no reason to doubt the sincerity of my friend, but I suspected his information, so I mentioned the news to a very old friend of mine, who then held a commanding position on one of our leading dailies, and who knew intimately Russia's principal statesmen. He listened to me with his usual sphinx-like expression, smiled his customary wise smile, and said gently: "I would not mind starting the hare if I thought he would run, but I don't think he will." That hare has kept extraordinarily quiet ever since. This may serve as an example of the way in which attempts were made to create friction. When I was Reuter's correspondent in Berlin I had several similar instances of how news was manufactured in that capital.

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their blind fear at the approach of what the Germans regarded as a cataclysm they plunged into the present war, and through their craven apprehension of a danger which was but vaguely looming in the distance, they destroyed the work of Bismarck's diplomacy, and forced Russia and Great Britain to combine with France against them.

But this has taken us a long way from Central Asia, and the distance is a measure of the unimportance of this region to Russian expansion and aggrandisement. Indeed, Central Asia cannot be described as a desirable conquest. Its long stretches of arid desert have under Russian rule been irrigated and reclaimed for civilisation; its unruly nomadic tribes, especially the fierce Tekke Turkomans, have been tamed and pacified; several Russian generals have earned fame and laurels in this region; Russian engineers, notably the late General Anenkoff, who died very suddenly in Paris, have made reputations and fortunes by building railways across these deserts; but the Russian Empire has gained not one iota of power or wealth by this expansion. Rather has Central Asia been a source of weakness to the Empire, absorbing as it has a number of highly-trained officials whom Russia can but ill afford to spare, and immobilising a very considerable army which has to be kept on practically a war footing, as the unruly population are much addicted to revolts, risings and unrest. It is not too much to say that by subjugating these tribes Russia has been rendering a service to



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what it is the fashion to call civilisation which it would be difficult to exaggerate. Central Asia has been conquered in a fit of absent-mindedness, like India, and but too frequently by generals who were anxious to win distinction and rewards, and whose glorious deeds, as Alexander II. once explained to our ambassador, Lord Augustus Loftus, could not be conveniently disavowed. The history of the Russian advance in the Far East is not dissimilar; in both cases the result has contributed but little to the prosperity and prestige of the country, and in both cases it would not be difficult to trace the influence of German diplomacy.

Russia's true mission is not in Southern Asia, but in Central and Eastern Europe, where the Slavonic races await her call. Under the presidency of that great Empire they will be able to develop peaceably, and work out the noble destiny which undoubtedly awaits them.

## CHAPTER XII

### GERMAN INFLUENCE

THE reader who has borne with me through these pages must have gathered as we ambled along together that Russia owes very much to German influence. Peter the Great virtually imbibed his love of Europe during wild carouses with boon companions from the German colony of Moscow. Catherine the Great was a German, so was her husband, Peter III. Her descendants married German princesses, and it must be confessed that these German rulers of Russia did much for their country, and honestly laboured within their lights and to the best of their ability to improve the lot of their subjects. If their efforts were mostly clumsy and often unsuccessful it must not be forgotten that they were after all Germans.

Germany was Russia's nearest neighbour. From Germany she imported her professors and her merchants, her men of science, her agricultural experts, her educational methods were copied from Germany, and to German universities numbers of Russian youths, as a matter of course, made pilgrimages. Hence the superficial observer would be pardoned for concluding that Germany must be the

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one country to which all Russians cannot fail to look with fond affection and profound gratitude. But the very reverse is the case. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no country in the world in which the Germans are so cordially detested as Russia. Nor is the reason far to seek, it will be found in the proverbial nutshell, and is explained by the incompatibility of temper of the Slavonic and Teutonic races.

There is no need to over-emphasise this incompatibility, suffice it to state that while the Russians have the artistic temperament, the Germans have the practical temperament, and possess the remarkable gift of being able to work without getting impatient, of taking a sort of tame interest in drudgery. This is the secret of their mastery of detail. Their imaginations are never fired by their own achievements, they remain stolid and dissatisfied and continue plodding, without haste and without rest; as one of their poets has so admirably expressed it, never losing count of the trees, though occasionally failing to take in the forest. With this extraordinary capacity for taking pains, not necessarily an attribute of genius, the Germans combine a pedantic intolerance. While they never get excited over their work, they constantly grow impatient and irritated with the people with whom they work. This is due to the fact that the German's attitude towards work is purely intellectual, never affectionate, and he therefore lacks sympathy. Whenever the German has attempted to follow in

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the footsteps of England and to found colonies, this lack of sympathy has been the conspicuous cause of his failure; for the German, in the absence of humanitarian feelings, and in his desire to accomplish the ends which he is intellectually convinced are right, has no other method of appeal than the appeal to force. His object is to strike terror in order to compel obedience, he never seeks to win allegiance by kindness, affection or sweet reasonableness. In his resolute determination to impose his will on others, and in his impatient irritability, he is capable of the most terrible, calculated atrocities, which appear only as means to an end, and are consequently, to him, excusable.

Introduce such a stolid, pitiless and unresponsive race to a people who live by their affections, with whom charity and sympathy are so abundant that they amount almost to a vice, a people like the Russians, and you will not be surprised to find they cannot mix, that they regard each other with mutual aversion. The German despises the amiable, easy-going Russian, and, because he cannot understand him, considers him a contemptible, lazy barbarian. The Russian, on the other hand, looks on the German as a sort of inhuman giant, an unfeeling and cruel taskmaster, a kind of superman, whose meticulous devotion to detail appears as his only weakness, a sort of stupidity. Consequently the Russian hates and loathes the hard, unsympathetic German as much as the latter despises the former. The two



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racés have thus no common meeting-ground, and are temperamentally incapable of understanding each other. By a strange irony of fate they are neighbours, and have, in consequence of their close proximity, been brought into constant touch, their mutual hatred being only increased by this intercourse.

When Peter the Great made up his mind to transform his semi-Asiatic state into a European country he naturally invited foreigners to help him in his Herculean task, and equally naturally found amongst his next-door neighbours the most convenient instruments for his purpose. In this way Russia became a sort of German colony. Seeing that her only accessible port was closed during six months of the year, it followed that her trade had to filter through Germany before it could reach her. Thus Germany became the taskmaster of Russia, the Germans were, what they themselves call, her culture carriers — *kultur-traeger* — they introduced German educational methods and German administration. The more progressive of the country gentlemen, especially those who owned large estates, engaged Germans to manage these estates for them on the latest plan. Such German estate agents brought with them their brutality and want of sympathy. They failed to introduce the methods which they were engaged to acclimatise, but they succeeded in making the name of German feared and detested over the length and breadth of the land.

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They practised appalling cruelties, they led disgusting lives, and they were universally loathed. As teachers and professors they were not more successful. In the domain of science and learning they made themselves ridiculous rather than terrible, and Russian literature abounds in comic portraits of these pedantic instructors.

Had German influence been limited to this exotic character, it might have still been pernicious, but it would never have taken root. Unfortunately, by the annexation of the Baltic Provinces Russia made what was virtually German territory an integral part of the state. Owing to the fact that the rulers of Russia were of German race, and that they therefore very naturally felt drawn towards their German subjects, the nobles of the Baltic Provinces played a rôle in the government of the country altogether disproportionate to their number. In the latter part of the eighteenth and during the best part of the nineteenth centuries we constantly come across German names in Russian history. The Adlerbergs, the Lievens, the Osten-Sackens, the Lamsdorffs, the Kleinmichels, the Neidhardts, Engelhardts, Kaufmanns, Rehbinders, Todlebens, Schilders, Korffs, and quantities of others spring to the mind at once. With very few exceptions, these nobles of the Baltic owed their positions more to court favour than to conspicuous ability, some have been even regarded as the bane of the country. Tourgeniev, in one of his admirable novels, speaking of this type, describes

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them as "court-generals," and says that they belong to a special race of their own, entirely different from any other, and having nothing in common with the rest of Russia. But these highly-placed Baltic nobles were able to advance the interests and promote the worldly prosperity of their compatriots. Thus it has come about that the Germans of the Baltic Provinces, mostly Protestants, whilst being in reality a conquered and subject race, have acquired a position and influence in Russia so great, that the uninitiated would almost conclude that they had been the victors and not the conquered. Of course, their geographical position has largely contributed to this phenomenal condition, but there is another factor which must not be lost sight of.

As I have already explained, Peter the Great, when he reorganised his country, was anxious to secure the co-operation of his nobles, and for this reason made it compulsory upon them to serve the State. Owing to the structure of society at that time, there was virtually no middle class, the guilds of merchants in the few big cities being practically the only exceptions. Thus there grew up in Russia the idea that it was the duty of a gentleman to serve the State, and indeed the State was in need of servants. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Russia swallowed more territory than she could conveniently digest. Moreover, the bulk of this new territory was very sparsely peopled. We all know the story of the famous Potemkin villages, stage settlements, which

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were kept on the move to give the Empress Catherine, on her progress through her newly-acquired southern dominions, the illusion that all this territory had been colonised. In Siberia, in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Central Asia, everywhere the newly-acquired territories had to be administered, and absorbed more or less educated men whom the national life could but ill afford to spare. The consequence was that the commercial development of the country was retarded. At first the Baltic Provinces, which controlled the ports of entry, Riga, Libau, Revel, etc., endeavoured to fill the gap, and presently began to overrun the country. Later, however, when Germany commenced her remarkable commercial travelling organisation, and started sending highly-intelligent and presentable representatives to all the ends of the earth, it was natural that, as Russia was the nearest, it should also be the first country to receive their attentions.

On visiting Russia the German commercial traveller at once found himself among sympathisers, among German-speaking Russians, who despised the inferior race, as they regarded it, who had conquered them, and who considered themselves to be members of the great Germanic family. Finding such friendly soil, the emissaries of German commerce were not slow to report how favourable a field for enterprise Russia afforded; and thus it came about that gradually the Germans began to flock to Russia, to invade its commercial centres, and to take possession of its



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trade and industry, until, commercially speaking, Russia became to a large extent a German dependency.

The German traders were followed by German engineers and chemists, and in the reign of Alexander III., when the national movement was at its height, Russia was so infested by Germans that they filled all the scientific and learned positions as well, and even keeping the Russians in their own country out of everything worth having. Alexander III. determined to put an end to this state of things, but found himself helpless in face of force of circumstances. Thus when the post of Imperial Astronomer fell vacant he could not find a suitable person with a Russian name to fill it, and had to effect a compromise by appointing a meritorious Russian general and giving him a German assistant to do the work.

Thus German influence in Russia is great. It has captured trade and manufactures, agriculture, science and education; and possibly after the war it may revive and make its way back again through the open door of the Baltic Provinces. Of course, Russia knows the danger, and has for the last thirty years been working at Russianising these provinces, but with indifferent success. The native races are not German but Esthonians, Letts and Lithuanians, who have for centuries been crushed under the yoke of the German feudal barons who conquered and ruled them. The Russian Government has been trying of late to emancipate these native races

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from the German influence, to introduce the Russian language and religion, to make scientific studies of the ancient native dialects, and to discourage everything German, even going to the length of renaming the towns, thus Dorpat has become Derpt, Libau Libavo, etc. With the traditional ingratitude of human nature, however, these native races, on feeling their feet, as it were, began to make common cause with the revolutionaries, and became a very stubborn factor in the revolutionary movement which swept over the country some ten years ago.

This revolutionary movement is another contributory cause of the extraordinary increase in recent years of German influence in the domains of industry and commerce in Russia. The new ideas and aspirations born of the emancipation of the serfs found expression which the Russian Government was bound to regard with disfavour. This disfavour on the one part created dissatisfaction on the other. Moreover, the German influences at Court, following the usual German methods and failing to understand the workings of the Russian mind, instigated repressive and reactionary measures, with the result that the education of the country suffered a set back and the intellectual progress of the nation was arrested. Thus the honest German neighbours were placed in the position of being able to come to the rescue of the country and supply its intellectual wants most disinterestedly, having previously done all they could to create the conditions so favourable to themselves.

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It is even alleged that the revolutionary movement was actually financed by Germany.

It thus happens that the visitor to Russia will find to his surprise that the majority of the shops in the provincial towns are kept by Germans. In Petrograd and Moscow this strikes the traveller at once as most extraordinary, and even in distant Tiflis he will meet with the same phenomenon. Nearly all the big commercial firms and manufacturers are German or at least foreign. On taking up a newspaper the visitor will discover that most of the advertisers have German names. This is not due so much to the want of enterprise among Russians as to the fact already referred to, that the public services absorb so large a percentage of the educated population.

Since the outbreak of the war I am given to understand that a great change has taken place, and that the Russians are coming into their own. This seems almost incredible in view of the former state of affairs, for during the last thirty years the influence of German manners and customs, German methods, German taste—or want of it—in clothes, architecture, furniture, etc., has been painfully patent and deplorably on the increase. Moreover, the German clerk, the German commercial traveller, the German commission agent, and the German chemist were ubiquitous.

## CHAPTER XIII

### BRITISH PROSPECTS

WHEN the present war is over, and people will again be able to follow the peaceful arts without disturbance, it is inconceivable that the Germans will be allowed to return to Russia. It may be confidently assumed that every attempt will be made to keep them out; and although these attempts may not be entirely successful, yet there can be little doubt but that for a time at least the reign of German influence in Russia will have to cease. What shall take its place? To assume that the Russians will be able at once to fill the void themselves is irrational. As we have seen, the bulk of the population is agricultural, and the numbers of the middle classes are disproportionately small. In other words, there are not enough educated Russians to go round. After the present war the cry of Russia for the Russians will very naturally be stronger than ever, but in spite of this the country will for many years to come be compelled to look to foreign aid for the development of her trade and industries. That foreign aid will have to come from either Great Britain or the United States. Neither France nor Belgium will



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be able to spare the time, the capital, or the people which will be required for the commercial and technical organisation of Russia. The United States, it cannot be denied, have got their foot in the country, and have in the past accomplished much there. Of late, however, their methods have too strongly resembled those of the Germans to have made them popular, and they have shown even less sympathetic insight into the character of the people. This is more especially true of American mining engineers. The attitude of American capital towards labour is one that the Russian people are slow to understand, it is not likely to take root in their country.

Great Britain, on the other hand, has advantages which it would be difficult to exaggerate. As Mr. F. H. Skrine, in his admirable Cambridge University Text-book on *The Expansion of Russia*, so happily puts it, while our friendship with Russia dates back to the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, Britons and Russians are separated by the breadth of Europe, by divergence in creed, language and politics.

In the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth and under the tyrannical rule of Ivan the Terrible British merchants established satisfactory commercial relations with Russia which have lasted to this day, in spite of the distance which separates them and the divergence in creed, language and politics. As for the divergence in creed, attempts have been made to reconcile the Greek and Anglican forms of the

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Catholic Christian religion, and although these were not crowned with success, they have, nevertheless, established a sympathy which had not formerly existed. There is every reason to believe that the political sentiments of the two countries will in the future be brought under a common denominator, the denominator of representative government. There remains the language, which presents fewer difficulties to English-speaking people than to any other.

To return to historical influences. When Peter the Great sallied forth on his apprenticeship to learn European methods, he spent a large part of his time in England, where the house of the famous John Evelyn, Sayes Court, near Deptford, was placed at his disposal. We are told that Evelyn was mortified by the gross manner in which his house and garden were abused by the Russian potentate and his retinue. It was one of Peter's amusements to demolish a "most glorious and impenetrable holly hedge" by pushing a wheel-barrow through it.

Peter the Great established fairly friendly relations with William III., who let him have spirits that were above proof, and thus won his way to his heart.

George I., who took a narrow and German view of the expansion of Russia, regarded Peter the Great with less favour, and under his reign our relations with that country became less friendly. Catherine the Great, on the other hand, while she cordially despised our politicians, cherished a great admiration

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for the English people, and had all her grandchildren brought up by British nurses. It was from the lips of their British nurses that the future Emperors of Russia, Alexander I. and Nicholas I. first learned to lisp the Lord's Prayer, and their early recollections of the nursery disposed them to preserve to the end a soft corner in their hearts for the country from which their nurses, for whom they retained a tender affection, had sprung.

Nicholas I. adored the British people, more especially the section north of the Tweed, and desired nothing so ardently as to establish friendly relations with them. He encouraged British engineers to come to Russia and found factories there, and even during the Crimean War he would not allow these alien enemies to be disturbed, but shielded them with his chivalrous imperial protection. He bestowed the rank of General on Wilson, and loaded him with honours. Since his time English has been largely spoken at Court, and all the Russian Imperial Family have been brought up by British nurses, have had English tutors, and have mostly spoken English before any other language.

Alexander II. had been a suitor for the hand of Queen Victoria, and his son, Alexander III., and Edward VII. were brothers-in-law and fast friends. The relations between King George and Nicholas II., who resemble each other so much in appearance, have always been most cordial and affectionate, and all the members of the Russian Imperial Family look

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upon the English Court as a sort of second home. The late Grand-Duke Constantine even translated Shakespeare into Russian.

If we turn from the Court to the universities, we shall find that English literature and English thought are probably more profoundly studied in Russia than in any other country. John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer were the favourite authors of the revolutionary party, whilst the reactionists found in English literature their main inspiration. The leaders of the Panslavist movement, who were supposed to cherish a most venomous hatred of Great Britain, were really Anglophils, and only desired Russia to copy our methods. Even Skobelev, who was always represented as impatiently longing to conquer India, was a student of our great writers, and knew English perfectly, admiring her people.

Indeed, there is a certain affinity between the English and the Russian races. They seem to understand each other, and get on together. No other nationality has had such happy experiences in Russia as the British. From the early English adventurers who founded the Russia Company, which is still flourishing, and the splendid Scottish pioneers who made the name of Great Britain respected in the early years of the nineteenth century, to say nothing of the Hughes family and the New Russia Company, down to the present time, the English in Russia have always been popular, and have invariably done well.



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Of recent years the Russian Government has made efforts to attract British capital, special favours were extended to British investors, and special facilities offered to British companies.

Thus it may be assumed that there exists already an excellent feeling, and that the ground has been well prepared for further mutual friendship and an indefinite development of good relations. It is, however, only fair to add that there is another side to the medal.

That the Russians like the British there can be no question. They prefer to have commercial dealings with us rather than with any other nationality. They trust us, they admire us. They feel that an Englishman's word is his bond, that he is straight and honourable. They consider every Englishman to be at heart a gentleman, and no country more keenly appreciates these qualities. The British employer gets on with Russian working-men surprisingly well, as no other foreigner does in fact, but for all that, all is not as it should be between Russia and England.

There are a number of factors in existence which have been skilfully manipulated by our German competitors to promote their own ends, and cause a coolness between ourselves and the great Russian nation. In this endeavour Germany has been most unexpectedly assisted by the clumsy efforts of certain self-appointed advocates of Russia in this country. The first line of cleavage was, of course, political.

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We were led to believe that Russia wanted India, and would not be happy till she got it. This idea was obviously hypnotically suggested by people who were anxious to keep us apart, for the rest of the world has not been slow to realise that if Great Britain and Russia were to become friends they could control the destinies of the entire eastern hemisphere. For this reason England and Russia have been hounded against each other, and countless occult influences have been at work to promote ill-feeling between the two countries. The pity of it is that they should have had even partial success. That they did succeed in creating a feeling of mutual distrust cannot be disputed.

Another source of friction between England and Russia was the very friendly reception which we accorded to Russian political refugees, and the cordial support which we gave to their views. While the Conservatives in this country were always talking about Russia's designs on India, the Liberals were bestowing their sympathy on the interesting Nihilists who were engaged in plotting to murder her rulers. Then came the Jew-baiting period, when it pleased certain Machiavellian Russian statesmen of German origin, like Plehve for instance, to conduct the national discontent into what were considered innocuous channels. The pogroms were but a passing incident in the national life of Russia, but powerfully affected the British imagination, and created the feeling that the Russian people were

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barbarians, and could not be regarded as a civilised country. Since then a people which considers itself as the most highly-cultured nation in the world has committed calculated atrocities compared with which the Jew-baiting of the Russians is rendered insignificant.

These have been the causes of political ill-feeling between the two countries. But there have also been financial factors at work. From time to time the British public have been visited by booms and slumps, until we have got quite accustomed to their periodic recurrence. What was once called the Kaffir Circus familiarised us with the ups and downs of the Stock Exchange, and we felt no resentment against the astute gentlemen who by manipulating the market succeeded in getting more gold out of the pockets of the public than was ever to be found in the bowels of the earth. When, however, the scene was laid in Russia, and the gambling counters were no longer confined to gold shares, but even included oil, people began to shake their heads and talk of the iniquity of Russia. They did not stop to reflect that the iniquity might possibly be found to reside much nearer home. Russia, on the other hand, has had cause to lament the up-to-date methods of certain British financiers.

And so it comes about that we have mutually to forgive each other a good deal. But Russia is not a resentful nation, and the Russian people like the English.

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If we desire to profit by the present trend of events, and recapture the friendship, which we have gone perilously near alienating, of a great and generous nation, we must be prepared to act promptly and speedily. One of the most important and immediate steps to be taken is to set to work to learn the Russian language. There exists a foolish prejudice to the effect that the Russian language is hard to pronounce and difficult to learn, and that it is hopeless to try to attempt it. This is absolutely false. Russian is for English people a much easier language to acquire than either German or French, both of which have so many words in common with our own. The reason is simple and obvious. The spirit of the Russian language is more akin to that of English than either of the two others. I have found in Russia that of all foreigners it is the British who seem to master the language more rapidly and speak it more fluently than any other nationality. Indeed, this is not surprising, for in spite of the fact that we have the reputation of being poor linguists, and rarely take the trouble to speak any other language besides our own, when we are put to it and compelled to do so we can pick up foreign tongues with remarkable ease. Our Indian officers and civil servants have no difficulty in acquiring native dialects. In China it is the English who speak the language best, and the same holds good of Persia and Turkey. That being the case, do not let us shy at so simple a language as Russian. Whether we like it or not we must



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learn to speak it, for unless we become the close friends of Russia we shall have cause to regret it for more than one reason.

Having trained a number of young men in a knowledge of Russian, we must send them out to Russia to push our wares, further our interests, and report on the openings which will from time to time present themselves for British capital, for Russia wants capital to develop her undoubted and boundless mineral and other resources. From the point of view of Western European industrialism Russia is but in her infancy. She needs development in every direction. As she increases in prosperity, and her population find their wants grow, we must be at hand to help her either to supply those wants from abroad or to erect factories to supply them herself; for Russia will not rest content to remain a raw material country, she is rapidly becoming a manufacturing nation, and in this direction she needs the technical assistance of experienced experts. Consequently we must send our representatives into the country, we must found commercial businesses, we must establish industries. Already our enterprising engineers are building factories, harbours and railways there. This is but the beginning of a prolonged and mutually profitable commercial and technical intercourse, which as time goes on will and must grow in volume and importance.

We shall be wise in avoiding speculative enterprises, enterprises dependent on the booming operations of

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Stock Exchange manipulators, and should devote our energies solely to the promotion of sound business. Our forefathers, who adopted this policy, and founded a number of splendid businesses in Russia, had no cause to regret it; and neither shall we, so long as we are prudent and conciliatory, and take the trouble to study and investigate the field before plunging into business there. While money has been made in Russia, much money has also been lost through thoughtlessness and wild speculation.

The appended translation of an article in a recent number of a German technical journal is interesting as showing how the Germans view the prospects there:—

### THE PROSPECTS OF EXPLOSIVES IN EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC RUSSIA.\*

By SIGMUND KAUFMANN.

Russia is the land of impossibilities, and this applies more especially to the domain of explosives. What is absolutely impossible in other countries is here often regarded as natural. No country in the world has so many paragraphs in the Penal Code as Russia. The judge has an enormous library of legal books at his disposal, of which he can only know the titles. Nevertheless, there is no country where the law can be more easily eluded. In Russia the explosives legislation has been framed in imitation of the Austrian, with all the severities of the latter. It is nevertheless most kindly observed by the mining authorities, especially the officials, such as mining inspectors, etc., which is partly due to the amiable character of the Russian, and partly to the

\* *Zeitschrift für das gesamte Schiess-und Sprengstoffwesen* (General Review for Explosives), No. 11, June 1st, 1915.

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constant social intercourse which the officials maintain with factory managers, mining engineers, and railway constructors, etc. This is also gratefully recognised by all those who have anything to do with explosives.

The use of explosives in Russia has become quite enormous in recent years, it has grown considerably from year to year, but cannot be indicated in figures as accurate statements are not available. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that the imports of explosives (both high and safety explosives) greatly exceed the production in Russia, in spite of the considerable duty of 4 rbls. 50 per poud (36 lb. English). This large consumption of explosives is a consequence of the considerable increase of the mining industry of recent years, especially in the Ural, where foreigners, and especially Englishmen, have taken large interests in the mining undertakings, as well as to the large number of new railways in process of construction in Russia, Siberia, Central and East Russia, which involve heavy tunnelling. It is difficult to form an idea of the enormous length of new lines which are being projected, and indeed mostly just before the outbreak of the war. In consequence of the deficiency in explosives and certainly also of labour, they are probably now entirely suspended. The enumeration of the most prominent lines may give some picture of the gigantic net of railways, the continuation and completion of which awaits Russia after the conclusion of peace.

The strategic Black Sea Railway from the ports of the Caucasus along the Black Sea from Tuapse, a railway of first engineering importance, with no less than twenty-three tunnels, of which three alone have a length of from two to three kilometres, the construction of which has been taken over by a large Paris contracting firm, whilst the small tunnels will be carried out by various Russian contractors, will require the entire production of an explosive factory, as the consumption is calculated at about 20,000 pouds (720,000 lb.). The Black Sea Railway Administration has already petitioned the Government for permission to import half the quantity of safety explosives from Germany. The strategic railway of Bucharra in Central Asia will have three

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giant tunnels, which are to be erected under the superintendence of the engineer of the New York Railway, Captain Haugh, for which 10,000 pouds of safety explosives are being imported from Germany. Another railway is in process of construction in Siberia, from Atshinsk Minusinsk to a length of 1,200 kilometres, which is calculated to absorb for its open and tunnel work a consumption of about 8,000 to 10,000 pouds of explosives. The Sevenret Railway in Central Asia, of a length of 800 kilometres, requires certainly much less explosives as compared with the other lines. On the other hand, the Moscow Kasan Railway still require considerable quantities for the construction of the two lines which are in progress. Of the North and East Ural Railway the two together are 1,200 kilometres long. Further, there is the Amur Railway, 1,400 kilometres long, which has taken six years to build under excessive difficult local conditions, which is now approaching completion, but will certainly still require explosives. The projected Lena Railway (about 2,000 kilometres from Irkutsk (Siberia) along the Lena River up to the famous gold-fields of the Lena Company near Bodeiba, will also consume much explosives. Add to these the military connecting railway to Sweden, over 10,000 kilometres are comprised in these lines, a figure which will be actually considerably increased. Among these a large number of tunnels are included, and it may be easy to imagine what enormous quantities of explosives will be required.

Large quantities of explosives will also be required for various large canal schemes, such as the connection of the Black Sea with the Baltic, the regulation of the Dnieper and the Volga, to say nothing of the blasting operations necessitated in the Gulf of Finland by the proposed widening of the channel and the fortification works at Hangö, Sweborg and Reval.

Of the mines which have so greatly increased their output the Kishtim copper mines should be mentioned first. They are to-day the largest copper mines in Europe, consuming annually as much as 15,000 pouds of explosives. Further, the Sivertsky mines (Ural) may now be regarded as very



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important; these, like the Kishtim mines, were turned a couple of years ago into an Anglo-Russian Joint Stock Company. In Siberia two new mining enterprises, founded chiefly in the far east, will also require large quantities of explosives, but their combined consumption will not approach that of the Lena gold-fields, which consume from 3,000 to 4,000 pounds of explosives annually. Some idea of the productive capacity and profit yield of these gold-fields may be obtained if we remember that the present managing engineer, a Frenchman, Peret by name, is the best salaried mining engineer in the whole of Russia, and is paid 100,000 rubles per annum. The consumption of the Lena gold-fields is only exceeded in the far east by that of the East China Railway, now in process of construction under the auspices of the well-known Italian contractor Gibello, who requires approximately 10,000 pounds for his tunnelling operations. A similar quantity will be needed in the gigantic fortification walls of Vladivostok, which are estimated to take two years to carry out.

How is this enormous Russian demand of explosives covered? The explosives factories existing in Russia are: The Russian Co., formerly Nobel, at Schluesselburg, near Petrograd; the A. G. Winner & Co., at Sablino in the Petrograd district; further in Southern Russia the "Franco-Russia Favier Co.-G."; whilst the Government Powder Works at Okhta, near Petrograd (celebrated for its proverbial monthly explosions), the Tula Factory and the gigantic new powder works in the Province of Vladimir, belonging to the recently-constituted Powder Company Baranovsky Limited, are virtually monopolised by the State. Hence the demand can only be partly covered by the Russian factories, and hence Russia is compelled to look to Germany for the supply of the largest portion of her requirements. The Russian explosives factories have raised no voice against foreign competition, and the authorities have (especially of late years and more especially with reference to safety explosives) adopted a benevolent attitude towards foreign imports, and have even made propaganda for them. The Russian factories, which were in any case

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fully employed, have borne this without a murmur, more especially in view of the fact that the German supply, like themselves, and in contrast to the German market, always realised excellent prices, usually three times bigger than those ruling in Germany. Of course, it must not be overlooked that the business management, the actual selling expenses, is much more costly than in Germany; and that the obtaining of a licence involves time and money, and especially money. The last consideration has possibly so far deterred many a German explosive concern from entering Russia; but this is short-sighted in a very high degree, because as already stated the expenses are easily recouped with large additional profits, provided of course that the explosive has been successfully introduced in the country. The main condition for such success is that the explosive should be unobjectionable from the point of view of shattering force, safe handling, keeping properties, and insensitiveness to blow and thrust, and can therefore be truly described as a safety explosive. Several nitrate of ammonia powders have been very successful in these respects in recent years, and are frequently preferred to high explosives on account of their greater safety. Of course, much depends on the ability of the introducing agent, who should not only know the country and people well, but must indispensably possess the necessary pertinacity and energy combined with considerable adroitness. If many a good German explosive has not hitherto been successful in Russia, this may with certainty be ascribed to unsuitable agents. In order to succeed it is necessary not only to be on good terms with the authorities, but to have the requisite aplomb with the customers, and to explain to them and demonstrate most fully the explosive to be introduced. The following German explosives have been successful in Russia, viz. ammoncahucit, siegenit, westfalit, and of those manufactured in Russia, favier, mietsiankit, and cheddite have done very well. An attempt is to be made to introduce roburite.

Consequently it has come to be gradually recognised that the manufacture of safety explosives in Russia is not only a

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very profitable business, but has become an urgent necessity, and would give employment, in view of the data recited above, to three large factories, with an output of from a million to a million and a half kilos. This fact has already been fully grasped by several large Russian mining and financial companies, who were conducting negotiations for the purchase of foreign processes for the manufacture of safety explosives with a view to their introduction into Russia, but the war broke out before they could be concluded.

It is quite certain that as soon as peace is restored these negotiations will be resumed all the more eagerly, seeing that the war has proved how greatly Russia is in need of explosive manufacturing facilities. The German explosives industry will then have to step in to seize this opportunity, and not only to retain the market already conquered, but to increase their scope and widen their operations, so as to exploit it thoroughly.

[NOTE.—While the author of this article has omitted to refer to the Archangel district, and has mixed up safety and ordinary blasting explosives, he nevertheless shows a fairly good knowledge of the conditions.]

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FUTURE

THE Russian word for glory is Slava, hence the Slavs are the glorious people. The rise and progress of this Slavonic race, as exemplified in the Russian Empire, has been indeed extraordinary. Russia has spread, as it were, in concentric circles, until it has reached the sea both east and west, from the Baltic to the Pacific, as well as north and south, from Archangel to Odessa. It would seem to be her manifest destiny to spread still farther, southwards and westwards. The history of the reawakening of this Slavonic Empire is the history of the gradual decline of Turkish rule, the decay of the Austrian Empire, and may be expected to end in a final triumph over Northern Germany. A curious fact to be borne in mind is that defeat seems only to strengthen Russia's vitality and contribute to her final success.

The gradual decline and fall of the Turkish Empire has taken a little more than two centuries. The final emancipation of the Slavonic races of the Balkan Peninsula was not accomplished until the other day. That emancipation, as the German Emperor foresaw, if allowed to be maintained, must inevitably lead



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to the break-up of Austria and the weakening of Germany, for both empires hold Slav races in bondage.

In Austria the Kingdom of Bohemia is Slav as well as Moravia, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to say nothing of Galicia, the Bukhovina and Transylvania. Hungary is virtually a Slav country which was conquered by a nomadic alien race, who have oppressed the native population ever since. In North Germany the Duchy of Prussia, as well as Pomerania, originally formed part of Poland, and these were Slavonic countries. The aborigines of Brandenburg were Wends, a Slavonic race who came from the East, and had gradually advanced as far as Kaernthen and Saxony, and had displaced the original Teutonic population. Bismarck claimed to be lineally descended from the Wends.

The Russians believe it to be their historic mission to free the Slavonic races from bondage, and incidentally to destroy the power of the Turkish, Austrian and German Empires. By his precipitate action the impulsive German Emperor has materially hastened the accomplishment of this historic task. His predecessors, wiser in their generation, had, in order to delay this apparently inevitable advance of Russia, endeavoured with considerable success to divert the attention of their neighbour from her legitimate sphere of expansion to Eastern and Far Eastern lands, with a view to embroiling her with Great Britain and China and Japan. For many years this

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policy appeared to be successful, and promised to delay indefinitely the advance westwards of the Russian avalanche. It was due to the extraordinarily inept diplomacy of Germany's statesmen on the one hand, and to the awakening of Great Britain and Russia to their true interests on the other, that this system broke down, and that Russia suddenly discovered that her true opponent was not the distant, liberty-loving England, whose interests were supposed to be ubiquitous, but the neighbouring and ostensibly friendly Prussia, who was the real enemy.

The attitude of Prussia and Austria, who had owed Russia so much in the immediate past, was so frankly hostile to their neighbour during the Crimean War that the scales at last fell from Russian eyes. If further proof was needed it was forthcoming some twenty years later at the Congress of Berlin, where Bismarck, in his capacity of "honest broker," prevented Russia from reaping the fruits of her victory over Turkey. It took England some further twenty years to discover that in supporting the Ottoman Empire against the Slavonic advance we had, in the happy phrase of Lord Salisbury, been "backing the wrong horse."

In spite, then, of the views of certain alien lecturers, whose object to embroil Great Britain with Russia was so obvious, and probably not entirely disinterested, the true destiny of Russia was to promote the glory of the Glorious, or Slav, race. It is not sufficient for the accomplishment of this mission to

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set these various subjugated Slavonic countries free, to create a Bulgaria and Servia, to give Poland back her autonomy and the territory she has lost, to establish an independent Kingdom of Bohemia, and to emancipate Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She must introduce a permanent peace among all these countries, protect them from their avaricious neighbours and from each other. They will have to settle down as free and representative states, and have to develop their resources, to promote the well-being and culture of their population, and co-operate in the encouragement of the peaceful arts. Countries which have been oppressed for centuries, and have been the battle-ground of short-sighted and greedy selfish intrigues, cannot be expected to be transformed suddenly, and without preparation and training, into prosperous, civilised states in the modern sense.

It is to-day growing increasingly obvious that the old diplomacy and the old ideas of aggrandisement have become superannuated. The policy of grab and annexation has lost much of its former attractiveness, indeed it has been found too often to bring its own revenge in its train. Modern diplomacy tends more and more to embrace commercial ideas. Everywhere Governments have discovered that the only true object of the State should be to promote the prosperity and well-being of the people. It is one of the merits of the much-abused House of Hohenzollern to have clearly perceived this truth, and to

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have walked consistently for two centuries in this direction, until it was on the point of making its people not only pre-eminent but practically invincible in the domain of the peaceful arts. The fact that the old ideas of diplomacy and conquest are out of date is strongly illustrated by the present war. Germany was on the way to conquer the world. By her scientific method, her intelligent application of theory to practice, her unflagging industry, her unquestionable astuteness, and the wise support of a strong Government, she had made herself felt in every corner of the globe, and was peacefully defeating her competitors. From being a poor, insignificant and divided state, she had within less than a century acquired front rank in the comity of nations. But eighteenth-century diplomatic considerations were allowed to supervene, and to-day the German Empire has already lost her prestige and her most profitable markets.

It is a lesson which it is to be hoped Russia will take to heart, for after the termination of this war, and we all know and are all determined that there shall and can be only one end to it, the importance and influence of Russia will be enormously enhanced. Russia, by reason of being the presiding nation of the Slavonic family, will take up a place in the civilised world far more powerful than that ever held by Germany. Some people have even felt misgivings at the prospect, and have timidly asked themselves what will become of the British Empire



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if Russia grows so strong and great. These fears are somewhat exaggerated; they may, indeed, be described as entirely uncalled for, because before Russia can usefully become an aggressive power she will have to organise herself in her new position. She will have a wide field for the display of her historic tact and world-famed diplomacy to get the various new Slavonic countries on their legs, and to get them to live together in harmony without bickering or trying to elbow each other out of existence. It may be predicted that for fifty years to come Russia will have her hands full, and that by the end of that period the international outlook will have changed entirely. For while Russia must consolidate the Slavonic family of nations, she must not neglect her own people, and in her own country the growth of representative institutions will alter the point of view of her statesmen and diplomatists.

When the present war is over what will be the first and obvious duty of the Russian Government? To look round for new worlds to conquer, or to endeavour to develop the possessions she already has?

The opinion is largely held that the effect of the present war will be to exhaust the resources of the countries engaged, and to impoverish them. Any reader who has examined under the microscope a patch of human skin which has suffered abrasion or injury must have marvelled at the extraordinary stimulus which appears to have been thereby given

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to the activity of the cells, and the remarkable activity and quickness with which Nature seems to hurry to repair the damage. A war is such an abrasion of the social organism, and its effect is nearly always to stimulate the recuperative powers of the nation. It is marvellous how rapidly this process of recuperation accomplishes its object. Now in Russia we have a country which is but awaiting the arrival of the intelligent adventurer to develop its latent wealth.

As we have seen, the educated classes of Russia have been absorbed by the State; on the other hand, the foreign element has had but one aim and object: to exploit the population, to sell to them its wares, and to make money out of them, which it has not spent in the country, but has only too frequently taken back with it to the foreign land from which it originally came. Worse still, the native aristocracy have in the past displayed a partiality for dissipating in pleasant places, like Paris and Monte Carlo, the money which they managed to wring from the toilsome labours of a sweated peasantry.

All this has changed or is in process of change, and of late Russia has created a surprising volume of capital. She is developing her coal, iron, gold and oil fields. She is introducing modern machinery in her agriculture. She is building railways, harbours and irrigation works. She has linked the Baltic with the Pacific by means of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and she is on the road to becoming the greatest

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transport country in the world. The Trans-Caucasian Railway links the Black Sea, and through that the Mediterranean, with Persia. The Central Asian Railway has virtually reached the frontiers of India. All the territory traversed by these various huge grand-trunk railway systems is waiting to be exploited, awaiting the irrigation of capital, the peaceful development of its resources. This development is coming, it is imminent, for the latent commercial instincts of the Russian nation, the spirit of the merchants of the Volga, of the citizens of the old Hanseatic towns and commercial republics, such as Novgorod for instance, has been awakened. Russia has got over her teething troubles. Her political infancy was marked by fits, or spasms, to which the strongest children are usually subject. She broke out in an irruption of Nihilism, and then went through a period of other national infantile diseases, such as Jew-baiting, agricultural disturbances, labour troubles, etc. It is safe to assume that she will now settle down to grow and gain strength and take nourishment.

One of the greatest undeveloped sources of wealth in the world is just about to fall into her lap, thanks to the futile diplomacy which drove Turkey into war. The region of Asia Minor known as Armenia in ancient times, but recently renamed Kurdistan, is one of extraordinary wealth of every kind, both mineral and vegetable. I am informed by Armenians that the mountains of that region contain copper,

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iron and gold in large quantities. Thanks to the non-progressive rule of the Turk and his oppression of the native Armenian, the natural resources of this virtually virgin country have not even been touched. The young Turks were on the point of developing the region, and building roads and railways to open it out, but their love of political intrigue was too strong for them, and they stopped at their intentions.

From Trebizond there runs the great caravan route which goes through Erzeroum to Tabreez-Teheran, and then branches off to Meshed for Afghanistan and India, the main road continuing to Ispahan in the south. This caravan route is the main artery of traffic between East and West. Here there is an opening for a line from Kars to Erzeroum, to be continued through Van to Tabreez, to connect with the Persian railway system which is in course of being projected.

Enough has been said to outline the immeasurable possibilities of Russia in the Near East. The Slav races of the Balkan Peninsula have an equally fine future before them, and possess in the Balkans a marvellously rich country, much of the wealth of which has not even been as yet so much as suspected.

Along the lines of peaceful development the Slavonic race has an enormous future before it, a future of useful activity, of commercial growth. In the new undertakings which are awaiting her enterprise she will require capital, and she knows that this is in the first place her greatest need. She has



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for the last few years been looking towards England for that aid which she requires. She has established branches of her banks in London, in order to get in touch with the British money market, but the response has so far been rather disappointing. If we are wise we shall rise to the occasion, and benefit by the exceptional opportunity presented by the present concatenation of circumstances, and become the friends and partners of Russia in her great civilising mission.

Of course, we are still a little distrustful of that Empire. We still look upon the Russian diplomatist as a marvel of astuteness, and we still think that the one aim and object of Russia is to get the better of us. That there ever was a school of diplomatists in Russia who had taken Metternich for their pattern, and were as full of duplicity, as untrustworthy and as short-sighted as he, may be true, but the whole aspect of Russian politics has changed. To-day Russia has come forward in her true national colours, and has emancipated herself from the German swaddling clothes which formerly hampered her movements and warped her judgment. To-day she sees the dream of two centuries on the point of realisation. The emancipation of the Slav race from the foreign yoke is on the eve of accomplishment, and when that has been attained, and her aim achieved, there will be no more occasion for tortuous diplomacy; moreover, there will be no friendly neighbour to suggest it, nor suspected enemy on which

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to practise it. Russia will be able to proceed harmoniously and grandly on her historical path. As I have hinted, she will have plenty of scope for diplomacy among her own kindred for some years to come. If she is preserved from internal strife, but allows the natural evolution of her liberties to proceed quietly and normally, she will be the most powerful country in Europe and Asia, she will be absolutely self-contained and as independent of the rest of the world as America, and she will contribute enormously to the wealth and prosperity of the inhabited globe. Let us hope that our people and the people of Russia will mutually assist in promoting this wealth and prosperity, and by learning to know each other more intimately acquire that mutual affection which is bound to ensue, and is the true basis of a lasting alliance.

Should the fates have another destiny in store for Russia, I can well imagine how easily her grand empire of to-day, with its magnificent resources, noble mission and splendid future, may follow the downward path of decline which so many other world empires have followed, but I should certainly have no fears for ourselves.

There is the danger that the reactionary forces in the country may prevail, that the victorious section will seek to add to its glories by further conquests, and retain by force what it has won by force. History teaches a curious lesson, which statesmen are too prone to ignore, and that is that an empire which

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is built up by force alone, and relies on force alone, has but a very sorry foundation, soon begins to rot at the core, and is bound to come to grief. Similarly a nation which has become so wedded to the peaceful arts that it has allowed its muscles to grow soft and its defences to get weak, is in danger of internal decay and external defeat.

The ideal condition is the happy medium, the strong state, strong in the affection of its people, strong in the consciousness of its own strength, strong in its policy of non-aggression.

Such an empire there is every reason to believe and hope Russia may become. As her people grow in political knowledge, in education and well-being, they will recognise that the happiness of a nation lies in peaceful progression, and not in an aggressive policy of conquest and grab.

Fortunately the present Emperor, the founder of the Peace Congress at the Hague, the humane and enlightened benefactor of over a hundred millions of loyal subjects, is a ruler in whose wisdom and benevolence Russia can have every confidence.

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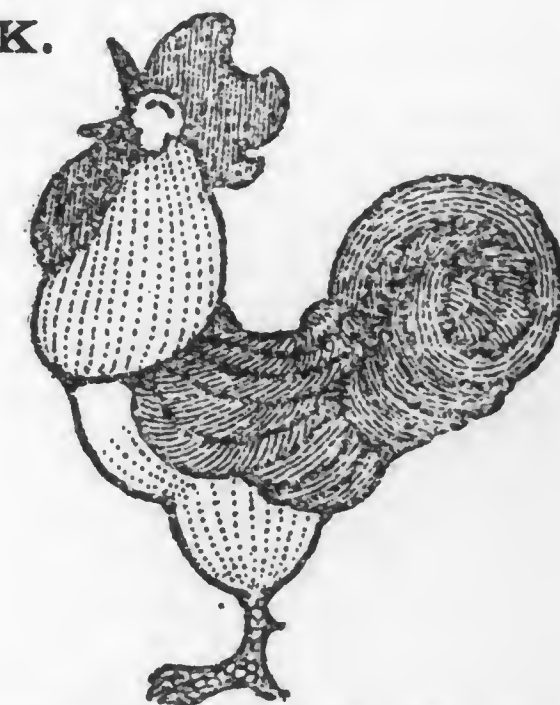
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